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THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 14 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND 8 PAGES OF TIMES PROPERTY* (*CITY AREAS ONLY)

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Mukul Choudhary's heroic 27-ball 54 powers LSG to miraculous 3-wicket win over KKR after his team's chase of a target of 182, **P 10**

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DOUBLE DELIGHT

Today's issue of **TOI** is organised in two sections, both equally packed with news and analysis.
To get the full reading experience of today's edition, make sure you don't miss the other section

OTHER BOOK TOP STORIES

- **K'taka II PU results see 12% surge in pass percentage**
- **Should SC scrap temple entry curbs on men, asks govt**
- **K'taka to roll out AI-based selfie attendance for staff**

Mind the Gulf: Lebanon, Hormuz test truce ahead of talks in Pak

Strikes Continue, Tel Aviv Signals Talks With Beirut

Chidanand Rajghatta & Agencies

US vice-president J D Vance prepares to lead a high-powered delegation for talks with Iran in Islamabad this weekend amid a yawning gulf between Washington and Tehran wider than Strait of Hormuz, which is itself under contention.

The issue of Israeli strikes in Lebanon, that is among the major sticking points, appeared to cool a bit after PM Benjamin Netanyahu said he is seeking direct talks with Beirut, a day after the country's worst bombardment of the war killed over 250 people in Lebanon. Later reports said Israel-Lebanon talks may start next week.

Israel's military, however, said it was continuing ground operations in south Lebanon.

Iran and Pakistan say the truce extends to Lebanon. Pakistan PM Shahbaz Sharief declared Wednesday the agreement covered "everywhere including Lebanon and elsewhere, effective immediately."

That claim was rejected by Tel Aviv and Washington. Vance said there was "legitimate misunderstanding," arising from "bad faith negotiation and bad faith propaganda".

Washington thinks Iran was led to believe something US hadn't signed off on. **The insinuation that Pakistan gave Iran assurances not part of the deal is testing Islamabad's credibility** in its bid to play good-faith mediator.

Meanwhile, there was no sign Iran was lifting its near-total blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. In 24 hours since the ceasefire, just one oil products tanker and five dry bulk carriers sailed through a strait that typically accommodated 140 ships a day before the war.

FULL COVERAGE | P 4 & 8; INSIDE JACKET | OTHER BK

PASSAGE OPEN, SAYS IRAN, BUT SHIPS STILL IN DIRE STRAITS

- Iran publishes chart showing it may have put **sea mines in Strait of Hormuz**, in a message that may be intended to pressure US ahead of negotiations
- Ship traffic through the strait well **below 10% of normal volume** Thursday despite the ceasefire. Iran deputy minister says 'Hormuz is open' but ships need **army's consent for safe passage**
- Benchmark **US crude oil climbs 6.8% to $100.8/barrel** on possibility of Hormuz having been mined. **Brent crude rises 3.7% to $98.2**
- Iran nuclear agency chief says protecting Tehran's **right to enrich uranium** is 'necessary' for any ceasefire talks
- Israel says it **killed nephew of Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem** in its intense airstrikes on Lebanon capital Beirut on Wednesday
- **Spain** condemns Israeli attacks on Lebanon, **reopens Tehran embassy** in hopes of 'achieving peace in the region'
- **Air France extends West Asia flight suspensions** till May 3, citing security risks from the war
- Over **3,000 Iranians have been killed during war**, country's forensic chief tells state media

Photo: AFP

A Shia religious site targeted by an Israeli airstrike in Wednesday's attacks that killed over 250 people

- J&K Students Assn says 1,100 of 1,200 Indian students have returned from Iran. Rest have reached Armenia, Azerbaijan
- American economy slowed to 0.5% in Oct-Dec, US commerce dept reports in downgrade of earlier estimate. In July-Sept, GDP logged 4.4% growth

Jaishankar heads to UAE, Puri to Qatar

India is looking to renew its engagement with the Gulf, with a visit by external affairs minister S Jaishankar to the UAE on Saturday and another by petroleum and natural gas minister Hardeep Singh Puri to Qatar. Both countries are vital energy suppliers for India. **P 4**

Amid anxiety, Pak readies to play host

Pakistan beefed up security in Islamabad as it prepared for high-stakes US-Iran talks this weekend with anxiety. A 30-strong US team had already arrived to review security, Dawn reported. Army chief Asim Munir and PM Sharif discussed the progress in mediation.

Sensex slips 931 pts, rupee weakens

With the US-Iran ceasefire in West Asia looking fragile, sensex gave up part of Wednesday's gains to close 931 points lower at 76,632 points on Thursday as foreign funds continued to lead the selloff. The rupee weakened, closing at 92.66/$ against 92.58 on Wednesday. TNN

Congress leaves Baramati seat for Sunetra Pawar

Just an hour was left for withdrawal of nominations on Thursday when the Congress responded to requests from the Pawar family and Mahayuti partners and dropped its candidate against NCP chief and deputy CM Sunetra Pawar in the Baramati by-poll. Twenty-two independent candidates still remain in the contest, but now there is no major challenge to the wife of Ajit Pawar. **P 4**

CWC meet today over women's bill

Congress Working Committee will meet on Friday to discuss their stance on the govt-proposed amendments to women's reservation law. The party alleges that the move will disadvantage southern states. TNN

Assam, Puducherry record highest-ever voter turnouts

Validation Of Special Revision Of Rolls, Says EC

Bharti Jain, Prabin Kalita & K P Sai Kiran | TNN

Record voter turnouts were seen in assembly polls in Assam, Kerala and Puducherry on Thursday, with Election Commission officials describing it as a "validation" of special intensive revision and special revision of electoral rolls and a sign of people's "unflinching trust in the electoral process". Polling surged past previous peaks — reaching all-time highs of 91.2% in Puducherry and 85.8% in Assam, while Kerala's 78.2% is the state's highest since 1987.

Officials said final figures could rise after consolidation of reports.

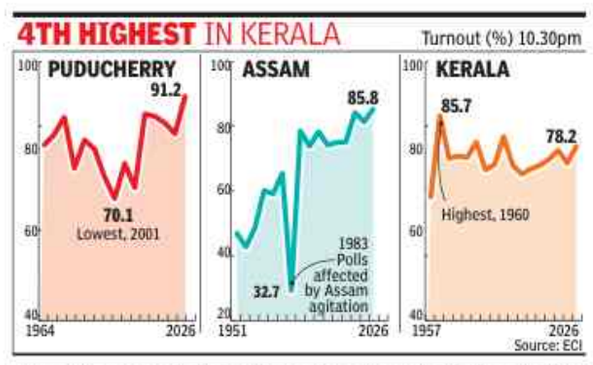
FULL COVERAGE: PAGES 5, 6 & 8

Puducherry surpassed its previous high of 86.2% from 2011, while Assam broke its 2016 record of 84.7% when BJP formed its first govt, dethroning Congress after its three-term unbroken run. In Assam, turnout marked the highest since the first elections in 1951.

Chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said the polls were a "historic testimony not only for India but for the entire democratic world", congratulating voters in Assam and Puducherry. An EC official said Thursday repeated the success story of Bihar polls in Nov 2025, recording the state's highest turnout ever. The official said removal of deceased, shifted, absent and duplicate voters reduced total rolls, lifting turnout percentages. Another said door-to-door enumeration doubled as a voter awareness drive, boosting participation. "It made the electors aware of their voting right, leading to heightened enthusiasm," he said.

"Electors... have reposed total faith in SIR, notwithstanding questions raised by opposition parties," another EC official said, adding the exercise validated both roll accuracy and conduct of elections. Kerala's electorate shrank by about 9 lakh (3.2%), Puducherry's by 7.6% or 77,367 voters, and Assam saw net deletions of around 2.4 lakh, almost 1% of its draft electorate.

▶Over 90 seats, P 4



Most Bengal deletions in Murshidabad dist

EC data released Thursday shows that Shamsherganj and Lalgola constituencies of Bengal's Muslim-dominant Murshidabad district had the highest number of voter deletions after post-SIR judicial adjudication while the Purulia-Jhargram tribal belt reported the lowest. Significant deletions took place in Malda, North Dinajpur, South 24-Parganas and Birbhum. Matua-dominant pockets of North 24-Parganas and Nadia, too, lost voters. The figures for Murshidabad — 74,775 deletions out of 1,08,400 names that were under adjudication in Shamsherganj, followed by 55,420 out of 99,082 in Lalgola — constitute a fraction of the 27-lakh purge reflected in the supplementary rolls. In Krishnanagar North, Krishnanagar South, Ranaghat North West, Ranaghat North East and Ranaghat South, over 90% of those placed under adjudication didn't make the cut. TNN

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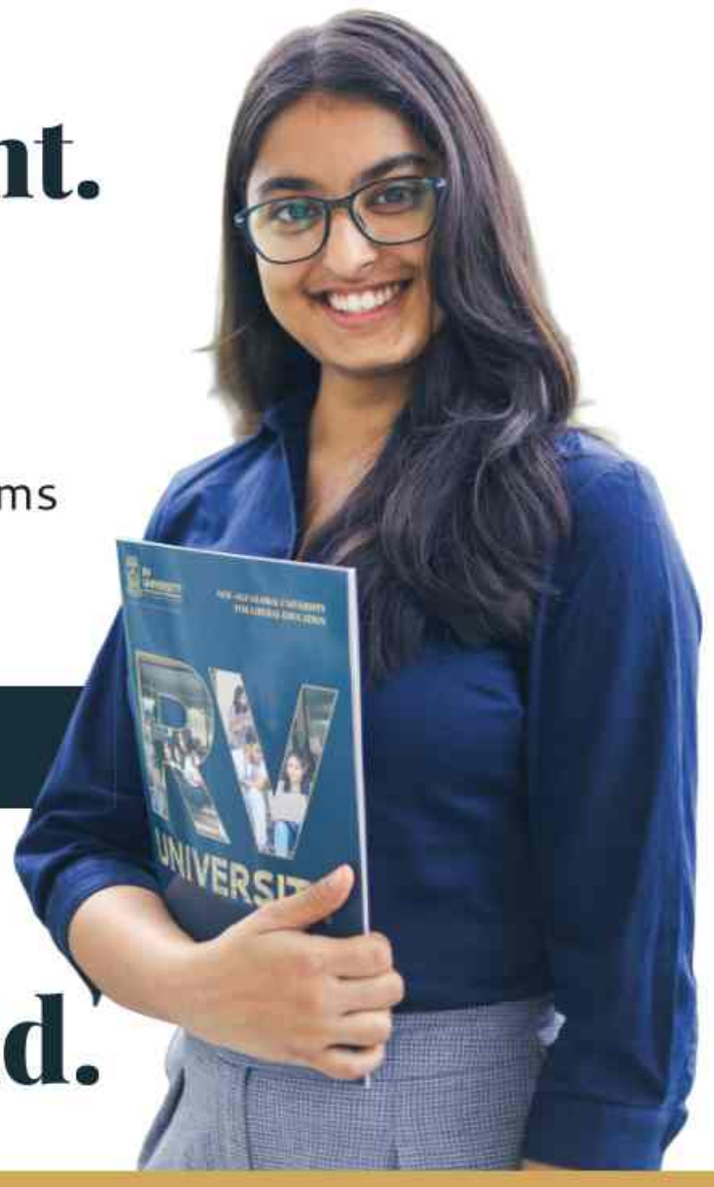

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Email: admissionsmysuru@rvu.edu.in
Website: www.mysuru.rvu.edu.in

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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

With both teams relying on explosive batting lineup and improved bowling, **Royal Challengers Bengaluru will take on Rajasthan Royals in a high-stakes IPL clash in Guwahati today**

Jasveen Sangha, dubbed Ketamine Queen, receives 15 years in prison for supplying fatal dose to Friends star Matthew Perry in 2023; co-defendants await sentencing

Rahul Gandhi says Congress, when it comes to power, will ensure CRPF personnel receive full rights and privileges and scrap the 'discriminatory' system that denies them leadership opportunities

Karnataka's Ayush Shetty storms into Badminton Asia Championships quarterfinals, defeating Chi Yu Jen 21-16, 21-12; set to take on third-seed Jonatan Christie in a crucial clash

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- **Assam, Puducherry record highest ever voter turnouts**
- **Congress drops candidate, leaves Baramati for Sunetra**

K'taka II PU results see 12% surge in pass percentage

Freshers Post Historic High, With 86.5% Clearing The Exam

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Karnataka's II PU results witnessed a notable academic turnaround, with students posting a sharp uptick in performance after last year's modest showing. The state recorded an overall pass percentage of 81.6 — a jump of 12.4% over last year.

Freshers achieved a historic high, signalling a major leap in learning outcomes.

▶FULL COVERAGE, OTHER BOOK
▶Significant rise in first class, distinctions, P 2, Other book

Among first-time candidates, 86.5% cleared the exams this year, compared to 73.5% last year. For the record, revision of minimum pass marks from 35% to 33% has benefited 5,577 students.

CLEAN SWEEP: 3 STREAMS, 6 TOPPERS

3 share first rank in Arts		2 on top in Commerce	
	Archana D M, Indu PU College, Kottur		**Adithi A Bapu,** SB Mahaveer Jain PU College, VV Puram, Bengaluru
	Sangeeta, Indu PU College, Kottur		**Disha,** Alva's PU College, Dakshina Kannada
	Shrusti, Smt VG PU College for Women, Kalaburagi		**Princilla Cardoza,** The Learning Centre PU College, Mangaluru

- Fresher girls continue to outperform boys with pass percentage of **88.7**
- Among fresher boys, pass percentage jumps to **83.6 from 68.2**

Among the districts, Udupi emerged on top with a pass percentage of 96, followed by Uttara Kannada, Kalaburagi, and Kodagu.

Announcing the results Thursday, Madhu Bangarappa, the minister for school education and literacy, hailed the students' performance and attributed the improvement in results to a series of targeted academic interventions, including timely completion of the syllabus, early appointment of guest lecturers, introduction of subject-wise blueprints and model question papers. The department has also decided to discontinue with the third round of examinations.

Explaining the decision, the minister said: "This year, the pass percentage is very high. Last year, pass percentage in the first PU exam was 73. There was an improvement of 8% in the second exam, but only 1.8% in the third exam. Hence, we decided not to hold the third exam this time."

In a first, students will be able to access their marks cards through DigiLocker. Physical copies will also be issued, though the department indicated that hard copies may be phased out in the future.

Should SC scrap temple customs curbing men's entry: Govt in court

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Continuing with its argument that the judiciary can't play the arbiter in religious matters, Centre on Thursday asked Supreme Court whether it could outlaw customs that bar males from entering temples, the way it had struck down the "gender discriminatory" Sabarimala Ayyappa temple custom barring entry of women of menstruating age.

Concluding his two days of arguments — one of the focal points being about constitutional courts lacking knowledge and expertise to determine what is a religion or denomination and how to define essential religious practices — Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said Hinduism encompasses a multitude of doctrines, sects, tenets, faiths and beliefs with unique customs and modes of worship whose validity is beyond the pale of judicial scrutiny, until and unless these fell afoul of the Constitution's concerns about public order, morality or health.

He told a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, A G Masih, P B Varale, R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi that "considering unique and distinct features in Hinduism, its rituals, the beliefs, mode of worship, and other religious rights under Article 25 and 26 (of Constitution), can never be tested directly, without any balancing and optimisation, on the touchstone of Article 14 (right to equality)."

▶ SG presents 6 cases, P 3

IN THE COURTS

- Bombay HC has quashed and set aside a 2015 FIR, and terminated all proceedings against **a senior executive who was booked for voyeurism** for allegedly staring at a female colleague's chest
- Calling for **discipline and rule-following among pedestrians and motorists,** Bombay HC upholds decade-old order of equal contributory negligence in a priest with Parkinson's getting knocked down by a bus
- No lawyer can be prosecuted for defamation **in respect of statements made based on client's instructions:** Madras HC
- Delhi HC upholds trial court order **declaring arms consultant Sanjay Bhandari** a "fugitive economic offender" P 3

Two IAS officers suspended; CBI probes bk scam

On a day when CBI formally took over the probe into Haryana's alleged Rs 550 crore financial fraud case related to IDFC First Bank and AU Small Finance Bank, the state govt suspended two IAS officers, Ram Kumar Singh and Pardeep Kumar, and 15 senior bureaucrats were transferred/reshuffled.

There was nothing officially to link the action to the case but sections of officials tried to join the dots. The case is related to fraudulent banking operations and fictitious transactions to siphon govt funds into accounts of shell entities. TNN

4 Hyd kids ousted over 'unruly' parents

An international school in Hyderabad with annual fees above Rs 1 lakh has been accused of ousting at least four students after their parents protested alleged confinement of some pupils in a separate room. NIHOC The International School in Uppal area denied the allegations and claimed the admissions were cancelled over "unruly behaviour" of their parents. **P 4**

K'taka to roll out AI-based selfie attendance for staff from May 1

Santoshkumar.B
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Karnataka govt will replace its biometric attendance system with an artificial intelligence (AI) and GIS-enabled platform from May 1, aiming to boost accountability and simplify logging of daily attendance by employees. The move will cover more than five lakh govt employees and around 15 lakh contractual workers across departments, boards and corporations.

Karnataka Advanced Attendance Management System (KAAMS), to be accessed through the 'Kartavya' mobile application, will require employees and contractual staff members to mark attendance by taking a selfie through the app at the start and end of their workday.

ONUS CHECKS IN

- 'Kartavya' **app installed in phones to cover 5 lakh govt employees,** 15 lakh contractual staff
- Attendance marked **via app using selfie; geo-tagging** for real-time tracking
- For **employees who do not have smartphones,** the govt has installed on-location 'Kartavya' devices

An order issued by the department of personnel and administrative reforms Tuesday mandates that attendance be recorded only through the new system from May 1, formally phasing out biometric devices.

For those who do not have smartphones, the govt has installed 'Kartavya' devices.

▶Contd on P3, OTHER BOOK

S'mogga road caves in: 3 buried alive, 3 missing

Three workers involved in road repair work in Shivamogga district were buried alive and three more were reported missing when mounds of earth fell on them Thursday evening. Several other workers sustained injuries in the accident in Hosanagara taluk, police said. The accident occurred at a hairpin curve near Sri Chandikamba Temple on Hulikal Ghat, sandwiched between Shivamogga and Udupi districts. The public works department took up the work following plaints of frequent soil erosion. Emergency teams have been deployed to the spot. TNN

K'taka HC stays work at Chamundeshwari temple

Vasantha.Kumar
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Karnataka high court has directed Mysuru deputy commissioner to immediately halt all construction activities at historic Chamundeshwari Temple premises atop Chamundi Hills in Mysuru.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum passed the interim order on a petition filed by Pramoda Devi Wadiyar.

The court has directed the DC to file a detailed affidavit accounting for the utilisation of Rs 47 crore reportedly released by the Centre under Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive scheme. The affidavit must include breakdown of expenditure, details of works undertaken, amounts disbursed, and the status of each project.

ORDERS ₹47CR AUDIT

- The **court has ordered a detailed audit of Rs 47 crore released by the Centre** under Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive scheme
- In mid-Jan, **construction of multipurpose halls and visitor amenities began** atop Chamundi Hills under Centre's project
- **Conservationists, Pramoda Devi Wadiyar opposed project** as hills are a reserve forest area

▶Contd on P3, OTHER BOOK

Alert teen saves parents from 'digital arrest'

Bareilly: An alert 13-year-old boy foiled a cyberfraud attempt after criminals posing as NIA officers tried to "digitally arrest" his parents by claiming that his father's phone number was linked to terrorists and a Rs 300-crore fraud, **reports Krishna Chaudhary.**

Tanmay, a Class VIII student, told **TOI** Thursday, "They asked my parents to stay on video call... I was sure this was a case of digital arrest, as I had read about digital arrests in **The Times of India.** My suspicion grew when the accused wanted information about our properties, jewellery and house."

▶FIR filed, say cops, P 4

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Intermediate Week-2
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Advanced Week-3
Build no-code websites, apps & games using AI
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Capstone project & national-level competition
Exclusive Advantages
Monthly AI Update Series
Stay updated with what's new in AI all year
1-Year Live Bootcamp Pass
Re-attend live bootcamps & engage with mentor
I know what I'm building this summer — with AI.
TOI THE TIMES OF INDIA
By the end of the program, students create no-code websites, apps & more.
Limited Seat Batch
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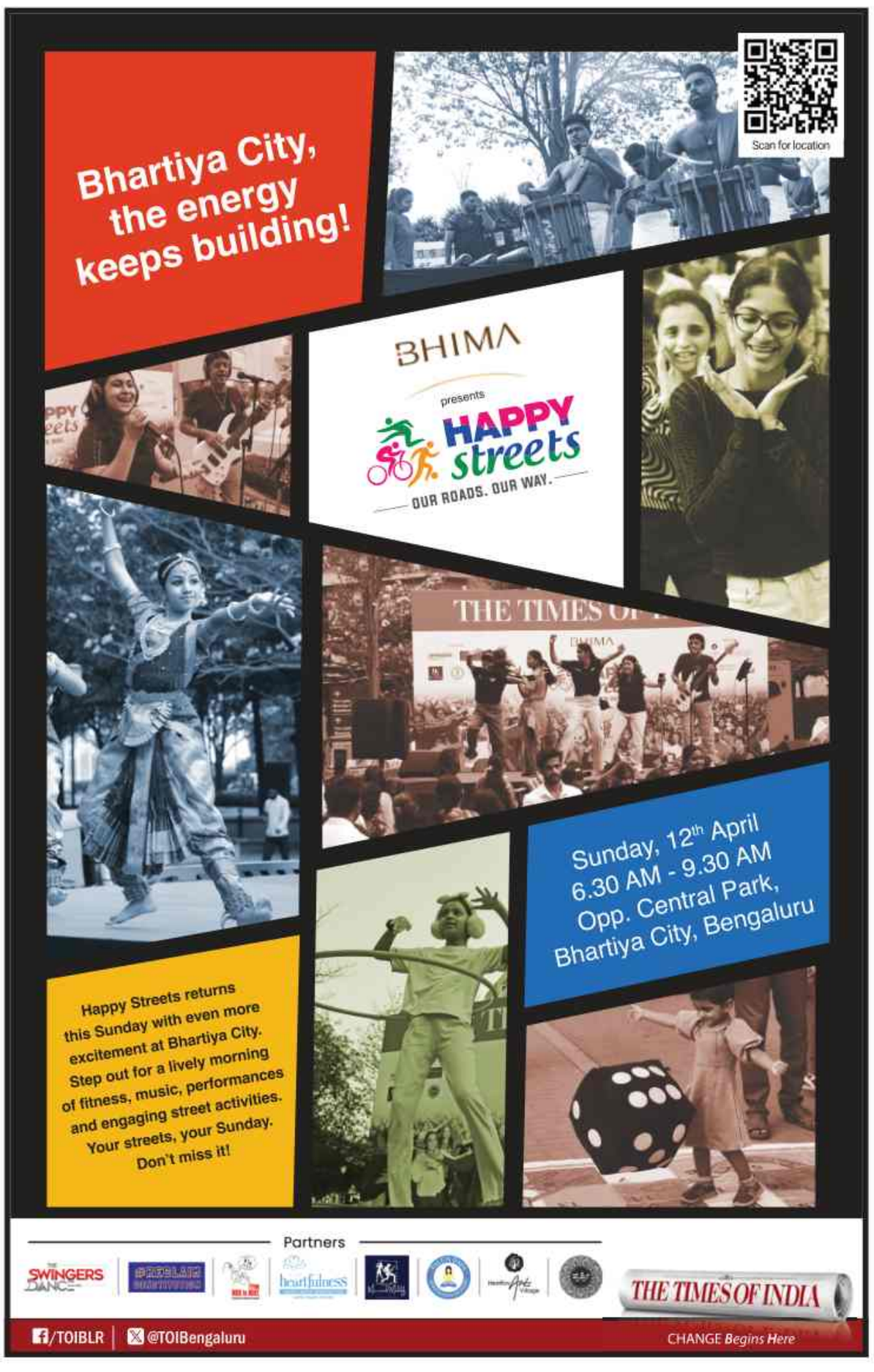
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CHANGE Begins Here

Bangalore Times

K-pop fever hits the road as BTS kicks off mega tour

430% spike in merch

317% tourist surge

Peter is a thriller rooted in nature and driven by mystery: Sukesh Shetty

Jewellery brand reimagines natural gemstone trends with Triptii Dimri

Tanishq unveils its first gemstone collection Aura, inspired by the vibrancy of Indian summers

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PU RESULTS: Individual And State Performances Improve This Year, Thanks To 10 Vital Initiatives Implemented By Education Department

FROM GRIEF TO GLORY

Commerce student scores perfect 600

Kevin.Mendonsa@timesofindia.com

Pics: Chethan Shivakumar

WINNERS ALL: Students celebrate at the Cathedral Composite PU College and High School Thursday

Disha, a commerce student of Alva's PU College in Moodabidiri, secured a perfect 600 out of 600 with first rank in the II PU examinations, amidst the testing times due to a personal tragedy.

On the day of her economics exam, her mother Savitha suffered fatal injuries following an accidental fall. She later succumbed to her injuries in the hospital. Despite the devastating loss, Disha returned to complete her remaining examinations in Hindi and accountancy while also taking part in funeral rites.

Sources close to the family said relatives even advised Disha not to appear for the exams while her mother was in hospital. Disha told **TOI**: "Completing the rest of my papers after losing my mother was incredibly difficult. The support from my sister, teachers and college kept me going." Her younger sister, Deeksha, a Class 10 student, said Disha was deeply shaken by their mother's death but remained determined not to miss any examination.

M Mohan Alva, chairman of the Alva's College, and Veena Agnes D'Souza, Disha's class adviser, said the lecturers too stood by her throughout the ordeal.

LIFE CONVICT SCORES 80% FROM BALLARI PRISON

In a remarkable feat, Ashok Kumar S, a life convict lodged at Ballari Central Prison, secured 481 out of 600 marks in the II PU exam, translating to 80.1%.

Ashok appeared for the exams under prison escort and took up the arts stream.

Posting on X, DGP (Prisons and Correctional Services) Alok Kumar lauded the achievement. "It's heartening to see that one of our life convict prisoners, Ashok, has obtained 80.1% marks in PUC exam. He appeared under prison escort from Ballari Central Prison for his exams. Glad to see that walls of the prison have not subdued his hopes for a better future," he said. TNN

IN THE HALL OF FAME

Second PU toppers across streams shared their goals, preparation strategies and the challenges they overcame. While many focused on competitive exams and future careers, others highlighted consistency and support from family and teachers.

ARTS

598/600

ARCHANA DM
Indu PU College | Kottu
After completing my degree, I plan to appear for the civil services exams and aim to secure a good position. If I end up working in the education or agriculture department, that's fine too.

SANGEETA | Indu PU College | Kottur
598/600
I plan to pursue civil services exams. I intend to appear for the UPSC examination in Kannada

COMMERCE

600/600

ADITHI A BAPU | SB Mahaveer Jain PU College | VV Puram, Bengaluru
Though I knew I would top, I had not expected that I would secure the first rank. How efficiently we study is what matters. Apart from studies, I pursue classical music and dance

SCIENCE

599/600

PRINCILLA CARDOZA | The Learning Centre PU College | Mangaluru
I was focused on JEE preparation and only revised the PU syllabus a month before the exams, so securing the state top rank came as a surprise. I am happy with the result, but my goal remains to become an engineer and get into a good college

ANKIT BHIMAPPA KARATAGI | Morarji Desai PU College | Hukkeri
I studied five to six hours daily, and at least eight hours for three months before the exam. Revising what I studied each day and reflecting on it helped me retain concepts better. The guidance from my teachers and encouragement from principal Rakesh were crucial

598/600

HOW STATE FARED: NUMBERS TELL STORY

FRESHERS

Kannada	76.41%
English	90.63%
Boys	83.65%
Girls	88.7%
Govt PU colleges	78.92%
Aided PU College	82.90%
Unaided PU college	90.73%
BBMP PU college	77.78%
Residential PU college	93.99%
Overall	86.48%

File photo

- Examination 2 — **April 30 to May 13**
- No. of students absent for exam 1 — **16,653**
- Apply for scanned copy of the answer scripts — **April 10 to 15**
- Download scanned copy of the answer scripts — **April 12 to 17**
- Apply for revaluation and retotalling — **April 13 to 19**

SUBJECT-WISE CENTUM

LANGUAGES
- Kannada: **5,228**
- English: **27**
- Hindi: **652**
- Telugu: 4
- Urdu: **69**
- Sanskrit: **6,060**
- Arabic: **23**
- French: **222**
- Optional Kannada: **62**

SOCIAL SCIENCES
- History: **965**
- Economics: **2,263**
- Logic: **2**
- Geography: **834**
- Business Studies: **5,542**
- Sociology: **460**
- Political Science: **710**
- Accountancy: **2,655**

TECHNICAL / VOCATIONAL
- Electronics: **394**
- Computer Science: **6,232**
- Education: **1,007**
- Information Technology: **158**
- Retail: **1**
- Automobile: **59**
- Beauty & Wellness: **55**
- Home Science: **14**
- Basic Maths: **731**

SCIENCE & MATH
- Physics: **3,224**
- Chemistry: **472**
- Mathematics: **10,982**
- Biology: **1,463**
- Statistics: **2,699**
- Geology: **1**

DHARWAD DISTRICT RECORDS 83.3%

Dharwad district recorded an 83.3% pass percentage in the II PUC examinations held in March this year, improving its district-wise ranking to 16th. Last year, the district recorded a 72.3% pass rate and ranked 17th. As many as 11 students from the district secured top ranks across streams.

In the arts stream, Lalayya of KCD Arts College, Dharwad, topped the state with 592 marks. Sadhan Toragallmath of Govt PU College RNS, Dharwad, secured the second rank with 591 marks, while Apoorva Karadigudda of KCD Arts College scored 590 to stand third. In commerce, Ainaz Begum Adhoni of Fatima College, Hubballi, Harshita Nanyad of KLE Commerce College, Hubballi, and Divya Dumbal of JJ Commerce College, Hubballi, jointly secured the first rank with 594 marks each. TNN

Udupi retains top position, Vijayapura makes progress

Bengaluru: The overall pass percentage across the state rose by 13 percentage points, from 73.45% in 2025 (Exam 1) to 86.48% this year.

Among districts, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada have secured the top positions with pass percentages of 96.39% and 96.35%, respectively. The deputy director of PU Education (DDPU) of Udupi district, Maruthi, told TOI that the district topped the charts last year and was confident of retaining the position this year. "We increased the number of review meetings. At least four district-level meetings were held involving officials and heads of institutions. Review meetings were also conducted after every term and preparatory exam," the DDPU said.

On the other hand, the bottom three districts are Yadgiri (71.21%), Raichur (74.09%) and Gadag (76.65%), followed closely by Kalaburagi at 76.97%.

Vijayapura registered the most significant improvement between 2025 and 2026, with its pass percentage rising sharply from 58.81% to 92%. Yadgiri also saw notable progress, improving from 48.45% to 71.21%.

Bengaluru recorded around a 90% pass rate among second PU students in Exam 1 this year. The three educational districts reported the following results: Bengaluru North – 90.05%, Bengaluru Rural – 91%, and Bengaluru South – 90.55%. TNN

Raising the bar: Distinctions and first-class scores see significant rise

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Not only did the pass percentage increase of the state, the individual performance of the students also improved drastically.

For instance, the number of students with distinction (85% and above) rose sharply from 1,00,571 to 1,70,529, a major jump that signals stronger high-end performance. Interestingly, this number in govt college more than doubled, rising from 7,214 to 15,178. First class (60% and above) also increased from 2,78,054 to 2,95,385, showing a broader improvement in above-average scores.

First class (60% and above) increased from 2,78,054 to 2,95,385, showing improvement

Meanwhile, second class (50-60%) slightly declined from 70,969 to 63,957, suggesting that many students moved into higher categories. Pass class (below 50%) reduced from 18,845 to 16,827, indicating fewer low scorers.

The improvement is even more striking among govt school students. First-class students increased from 49,684 to 63,189. Pass class (lowest category) decreased from 7,107 to 6,743.

STUDENTS FALLING SHORT OF PASS MARKS

Exam-1	1 subject	2 subjects	3 subjects	4 subjects	5 subjects	6 subjects
2026	44,529	18,347	10,425	6,147	3,475	1,772
2025	56,125	35,737	26,745	21,781	15,002	30,923

Measures that boosted results

The department of school education was elated at the results, calling it "historic". The department released 10 action-points it had taken to improve the results

- All govt PU colleges were asked to ensure completion of the syllabus by the end of Dec.
- Guest lecturers were appointed from June 1 to ensure human resources were available from the beginning of the academic year.
- The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board released a detailed blueprint along with model question papers for each subject, offering clarity on exam patterns, weightage, and key focus areas for students and lecturers. However, many have pointed out that the board exam papers closely mirrored the model questions, leaving little room for critical thinking.

File photo

- Comprehensive question banks for all subjects were prepared and hosted on the department's website.
- Two-day training programmes were conducted for all govt PU lecturers at District Institutes of Education and Training.
- Online training programme was conducted to guide lecturers on effective utilisation of question banks and blueprints.
- Focused interventions in Kalyana Karnataka region.
- In a first, preparatory exams conducted using centrally prepared question papers, ensuring standardisation in assessment.
- Statewide academic monitoring through audio conferences.
- Lecturers responsible for exceptionally poor academic performance are being subjected to departmental action.
- A mega parents-teachers meeting helped engage parents in the academic progress of students.

HC relief for pvt firm employee in breach of promise of marriage case

Vasantha.Kumar
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Highlighting rising cases of misuse of the breach of promise of marriage provision under BNS Section 69, the Karnataka high court has granted relief to an employee of a private company with regard to the complaint lodged by his colleague.

"The litigation is with regard to misuse of Section 69 of the BNS and mushrooming of cases before this court by the day and in all cases, where the relationship ends in a breakup, the man is in the lockup. Therefore, it is necessary for this court to direct release of the petitioner forthwith," Justice M Nagaprasanna observed in his interim order while staying the investigation and the proceedings against the petitioner, pending before the 41st additional chief judicial magistrate court, Bengaluru, till the next date of hearing.

The petitioner, who hails from Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, and the complainant were colleagues and got into a relationship that turned physical as well. This happened over a period of eight months, the court was told.

The complaint was registered on the allegation that the petitioner had a physical relationship on commitment of marriage and broke the said commitment. The result of the complaint is that the petitioner is in judicial custody for more than six weeks now, the court was informed.

Justice Nagaprasanna noted that the complaint clearly indicated the alleged acts between the petitioner and the complainant were all consensual as not a word of allegation of sexual assault by the petitioner against the complainant was narrated.

Though the provision, ie, section 69 of the BNS, would punish a person having sexual intercourse with the victim on the deceitful promise of marriage, in the case at hand, there is no indication except the fact that the breach of promise of marriage is an afterthought that springs in the complaint, the judge said, granting relief on the strength of the observation of the SC in Dr Dhruvaram Murlidhar Sonar vs State of Maharashtra case.

No bail for doctor accused of dermatologist-wife's murder

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A local court Wednesday rejected bail to **Dr Mahendra Reddy GS**, arrested on charges of murdering his dermatologist wife, Kruthika Reddy, through an overdose of anaesthesia in April 2025.

A general physician with Institute of Gastroenterology and Organ Transplant in Victoria Hospital, Reddy was arrested by Marathahalli police in Oct 2025 after Kruthika's post-mortem report confirmed the presence of anaesthesia in a huge quantity.

Also, police had filed a preliminary charge-sheet explaining how Reddy, unhappy with his wife Kruthika over her alleged ill health, hatched the murder and intentionally administered an overdose of Propofol anaesthesia to her, leading to her death.

While objecting to Reddy's bail plea, Marathahalli police told court that they had recovered lakhs of digital files, along with PhonePe chats, deleted data, intimate photographs and other key material.

One of the retrieved messages from Reddy's mobile phone read: "I don't have proof, but I have killed Kruthika. I will go behind bars."

Another message, sent to a female medical professional, read: "Do not text or call me anywhere after you see this message. I will call you once everything is settled. Mostly police will call you to ask what's our relation. Tell them we are friends..."

Mahendra and Kruthika got married in May 2024. Mahendra reportedly was close to four-five other women. He also expressed to a few of them separately that he wanted to marry them.

Another message sent to around five women from Reddy's phone that was deleted later read: "I killed my wife for you."

Two students extort gold from teenager, land in soup

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Two students allegedly coerced a minor into stealing gold from his own home, leading to their arrest.

The complainant's son admitted that he was stealing gold from the house and handing it over to his friends, who had initially lured him into bringing cash for partying. The duo then escalated demands, coercing and blackmailing him into stealing gold repeatedly

The accused — a 16-year-old boy and a 20-year-old engineering student — are said to have initially gained the trust of the former's classmate, 16, before borrowing money and gold ornaments, citing personal problems. What followed, however, was a pattern of manipulation and blackmail that forced the victim deeper into trouble.

The case surfaced after a software engineer residing in KN Extension, Yeshwanthpur, approached police on Oct 9 last year, reporting missing gold ornaments from his apartment. He lives with his elderly mother, wife who is also a tech professional, and their two school-going children.

According to the complainant, his wife last wore the ornaments on Oct 1, 2024 for a function and kept them safely in a cupboard upon returning. When she attempted to use them again on June 10, 2025, for a function, they were missing. The stolen items included a mangalya chain, bangles, earrings, gold chains and gold dollars.

A case was registered under Section 305 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (theft in a dwelling house). However, the case remained unsolved until March 25 this year, when a shocking confession brought a breakthrough.

The complainant's son admitted that he was stealing gold from the house and handing it over to his friends, who had initially lured him into bringing cash for partying. Subsequently, the duo escalated their demands, coercing and blackmailing him into stealing gold ornaments repeatedly.

Investigations revealed that the accused sold the stolen gold to jewellers with the help of a 45-year-old acquaintance, who falsely claimed the jewellery belonged to his wife.

Police teams tracked down the accused in Yeshwanthpur and, during interrogation, they confessed to the crime.

Police were able to recover 107 grams of gold from jewellers in Malleshwaram and on Magadi Road. However, officers said the total quantity of stolen gold is significantly higher than what has been recovered so far.

The juvenile has been remanded to a state-run boys' home, while the engineering student has been sent to judicial custody. Police said the case highlights the dangerous consequences of peer pressure and manipulation among youngsters, where friendship turned into fear and exploitation.

Toddler injured after fall from first floor

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A one-and-a-half-year-old girl fell from the first floor of a residential building while playing at Nayandahalli in west Bengaluru.

The incident took place around 6.30pm on April 6. The toddler was playing inside the house when she wandered out through the main door into the passage. She is believed to have climbed onto a chair placed near a metal grill, lost her balance, and fallen onto the road below.

A passerby who witnessed the fall immediately alerted the parents and rushed to assist the child. She was taken to a private hospital in Basavanagudi and is said to be responding positively.

According to police, the mother had briefly stepped away to the kitchen when the incident occurred. The toddler is the couple's only daughter. Apart from a head injury, she is otherwise safe. "We don't blame anyone for the incident," the father said.

The incident was captured on CCTV camera, which shows the child peering through the grill moments before the fall. Hearing the commotion, neighbours alerted the mother, who rushed downstairs in panic and collapsed upon seeing her injured child.

Chandra Layout police said no complaint has been filed.

SWR gets new general manager

Senior IRSME (Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers) officer from the 1989 batch, P Ananth, Thursday assumed charge as the general manager of South Western Railway (SWR). He was serving as additional general manager of SWR before taking up the new role.

He holds a degree in mechanical engineering and has served in the railways in various capacities, including director (manpower planning) at the Railway Board, Chief Mechanical Engineer at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), and general manager (Coach Maintenance Management System) at the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS), New Delhi. He has also served as Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of the Madurai Division of Southern Railway. TNN

Strait of Frazer: Choke point gives commuters a dusty ride

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Residents and commuters on Netaji Road near the Cantonment area and Frazer Town railway parallel road in the eastern part of the city say they are being forced to navigate "unliveable" conditions, as thick dust clouds from prolonged civic works have turned the stretch into a health and safety hazard.

PIPELINE WORK

Syed Asif

"The pipeline works are nearing completion. Once finished, the stretch will be handed over to the Greater Bengaluru Authority. The road will then be fully restored and asphalted — A BWSSB official

HAZARD ZONE: For over a year, BWSSB work has left Netaji Road dug up, with loose sand and debris constantly stirred up by passing vehicles.

For over a year, ongoing pipeline works by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) have left the road dug up, with loose sand and debris routinely kicked up by passing vehicles. Reduced visibility, polluted air and uneven surfaces have made commuting particularly risky, with pedestrians, school students and motorists bearing the brunt. "Vehicles kick up so much dust that you can barely see the road ahead," said a commuter, pointing to frequent near-miss accidents caused by poor visibility and accumulated debris.

What began as an infrastructure upgrade evolved into a prolonged disruption, affecting both livelihoods and daily life. Shopkeepers report a sharp decline in footfall. "No one can stand here for more than 10 minutes," said Mohammed Saleem, who runs a store on the stretch.

Residents say the situation has also led to direct financial losses. Naseem Bano, a local resident, said her family, along with neighbours, spent Rs 25,000 to repair an electrical wire damaged during the works. "No agency took responsibility," she said, adding that the disruption during Ramzan compounded their difficulties.

Air pollution has emerged as a serious health concern. Families report clogged air-conditioner vents and respiratory illnesses. "My son was hospitalised with a chest infection due to the dust," a family member said.

Public transport access has also been hit. Dinesh V, regional head of Jesus Call Prayer Tower, said buses no longer stop along the stretch. "The buses halt nearly 500 metres away because the road has narrowed and dust levels are too high. It is very difficult for people to walk that far," he said.

Encroachments by roadside vendors on relatively motorable portions have further reduced carriageway space, worsening congestion along the already dug-up corridor.

Despite repeated representations, including petitions to Pulakeshinagar MLA AC Srinivasa, residents allege little action has been taken. "The stretch near the MLA's residence is fixed, but our roads remain neglected," said Khalid Quraishi, a shopkeeper.

Originally scheduled for completion within two to three months, the project has dragged on for over a year, with recurring cycles of digging and patchwork every few weeks.

Responding to concerns, a BWSSB official said the delays were due to phased pipeline execution. "The pipeline works are nearing completion, and once finished, the stretch will be handed over to the Greater Bengaluru Authority. The road will then be fully restored and asphalted," the official said.

— By Nyasa Gupta and Jia Khosla

300 sandalwood plants gutted in fire

Over 300 sandalwood trees and 800 bamboo plants were destroyed in a fire that broke out on a farm at Chowdadenahalli village of Chintamani taluk in Chikkaballapura district.

The affected 1.35-acre plot belongs to Ramesh, a farmer, who has alleged foul play. According to his complaint filed on April 4, Chintamani Rural police have registered an FIR.

Ramesh said he had originally planted around 500 sandalwood trees and 1,000 bamboo plants across nearly two acres, with fencing made of American aloe—all of which were gutted in the blaze.

He estimated the losses at over Rs 75 lakh. TNN

Feeling heatwave? B'luru braces for sweltering 39°C

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Even as Bengalureans continue to complain about the rising heat this summer, the Bengaluru Urban district administration and the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) have warned that temperatures could climb further to levels that may impact public health and trigger heat strokes.

Going by the forecast issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bengaluru city is likely to record higher temperatures in the coming days, Bengaluru Urban District Commissioner G Jagadeesha said. He has urged citizens to take precautions.

"The public is advised to stay informed about heat warnings through radio, TV and newspapers. Drink plenty of water even if you are not thirsty, and wear light, loose cotton clothing, preferably white. When stepping out, use sunglasses, hats and proper footwear," Jagadeesha said.

He also recommended consuming homemade cooling drinks such as lassi, buttermilk, lemon water and sherbet. Water-rich fruits, including watermelon, muskmelon, oranges, grapes, pineapple, cucumber and tender coconut, have been suggested to stay hydrated.

Vulnerable groups such as children, senior citizens, pregnant women, outdoor workers and those with existing health conditions — especially heart disease and hypertension — have been asked to exercise extra caution.

Take care of animals

Authorities have also urged residents to care for animals by keeping them in shaded areas and providing adequate water, while warning against leaving pets in parked vehicles. Meanwhile, clinics across the city have begun reporting heat-related illnesses, with doctors advising people to avoid stepping out between 11am and 3pm, when temperatures peak.

"Rising temperatures can significantly affect the body, leading to dehydration, fatigue, muscle aches, fainting and even a drop in blood pressure. In severe cases, it can result in heat stroke," said Dr Suchismitha Rajamanya, lead consultant and HOD (internal medicine), Aster Whitefield Hospital.

She added, "In case of heat stroke, the person should be immediately moved to a cool place, given fluids if conscious, and cooled using wet sponging, ice packs and removal of excess clothing. If the person remains drowsy, unresponsive or shows signs of low blood pressure, they must be taken to a hospital immediately."

MERCURY LEVEL SURPASSES 35°C

The maximum temperature in Bengaluru has hit the 35 degrees Celsius mark over the last couple of days, with the Bengaluru City weather station recording a maximum temperature of 35.4 degrees Thursday. The weatherman said that while the same temperature range will continue over the next two days, in the upcoming weeks, mercury levels might shoot up.

"As of now, the temperature has not deviated too much from normal, but Bengaluru residents are feeling the heat as the nights are also warmer like the days. However, in the next two weeks, the maximum temperature in the city might touch 39 degrees Celsius," said CS Patil, scientist, IMD Bengaluru.

Photo for representation

HOW TO COPE WITH SUMMER

- Drink plenty of water, even if not thirsty
- Wear light, loose cotton clothing (preferably white)
- Stay indoors during peak heat hours (11am-3pm)
- Use sunglasses, hats, umbrellas and proper footwear
- Use fans and take frequent cool baths
- Keep rooms well ventilated
- Avoid alcohol, tea and coffee

"Rising temperatures can significantly affect the body, leading to dehydration, fatigue, muscle aches, fainting and even a drop in blood pressure. In severe cases, it can result in heat stroke

Dr Suchismitha Rajamanya | ASTER WHITEFIELD HOSPITAL

Groom-to-be run over by palanquin-tractor

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: What was meant to be a joyful visit to a temple fair turned into a tragedy for a 29-year-old man, who was soon to be married, as he lost his life in an accident at Hulimavu in the early hours of Thursday.

The incident occurred during the annual Brahmarathotsava celebrations at the Sri Kodanda Ramaswamy temple, where a large number of devotees had gathered. As part of the festivities, a late-night palanquin procession was being held.

Akshath, a resident of Banashankari 2nd Stage, went to Hulimavu to distribute his wedding invitations to his friends. He stayed back at a friend's house to watch the procession. His marriage was scheduled for the end of the month.

Based on preliminary investigations, police said Akshath was standing by the roadside watching the palanquin of Sri Mutturayaswamy when a tractor carrying it ran over him around 4.30am. The tractor hit Akshath, who fell onto the road. The tractor's right rear wheel dragged him for a few metres and ran over him, causing injuries to his head, abdomen and back. People at the spot rushed him to a nearby private hospital, where the doctors declared him brought dead.

The incident left his family and friends devastated. The tractor driver abandoned the vehicle at the spot and fled. Hulimavu traffic police registered a case against the driver based on a complaint filed by Akshath's father Purushottam, a businessman who owns fuel stations and schools in the city.

Preliminary reports suggest the accident occurred due to driver negligence. DCP (south traffic) Gopal M Byakod visited the spot.

Hulimavu traffic police later nabbed the absconding tractor driver, identified as Asadullah, 53, by late evening. His blood samples were collected to ascertain whether he was driving under the influence of alcohol.

Akshath was a BCA graduate and was assisting his father in the family business. The family donated his eyes before the postmortem.

Youth ends life as lover declines to marry him

A 23-year-old private company employee died by suicide at his residence in Yelahanka New Town Thursday afternoon.

The deceased, Abhishek, hailed from Tirumalanagar in Yelahanka New Town. Police recovered a death note written in English from the scene. "Abhishek was in love with a girl, but her family opposed their relationship. When she declined to marry him, he took this extreme step," authorities said. Police have registered a case of unnatural death.

CRIME FILE

Labourer rapes minor, in custody

A 25-year-old daily wage worker from Bihar was arrested Thursday on charges of raping an 11-year-old girl in Jnanabharati in West Bengaluru. The accused is Mohammed Munna. Police booked Munna under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, and arrested him. "According to the girl's mother, she saw her daughter carrying Rs 150 with her Wednesday night. When questioned, the girl said Munna, after abusing her, handed over the money," police said.

Court defers order in murder case

The special court for elected representatives Thursday adjourned to April 15 the orders on the murder case, involving Vinay Kulkarni, Congress MLA Dharward Rural. Kulkarni and 20 others were named for allegedly murdering BJP zilla panachayat member in 2016. TNN

'Zombie Drug' viral video debunked: Police confirm man was not on narcotics

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A viral video circulating on social media platforms, including Instagram, purportedly showing a man under the influence of a "zombie drug" has been debunked by city police. Authorities clarified that the man in the video was not on any drugs.

The video sparked widespread concern, with many viewers claiming the individual appeared affected by dangerous substances. Responding promptly, personnel from Bagalur police station traced the man near an institute in Yelahanka within hours of the video surfacing and subjected him to a medical test.

Man came to city 3 months ago

The man in the video, a truck driver from Punjab who moved to the city three months ago and resides in Bagalur, told police that he had taken a gastric tablet before eating upma, followed by his prescribed medication for arthritis and sinusitis. After consuming two quarters of liquor while off duty Wednesday, he became unsteady and his face appeared swollen due to a reaction between the medication and alcohol. A passerby recorded the incident and shared it on social media. Bagalur police have registered a case and are tracing the person who recorded the video. Notices will be issued to everyone who shared the clip, including actor Duniya Vijay, an officer said.

Police commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh confirmed that medical reports found no narcotic or psychotropic substances in the man featured in the video. Doctors found that he was suffering from arthritis and sinusitis, and that his disoriented behaviour was the result of prescribed pain medication taken along with alcohol.

Singh urged the public not to share unverified or misleading content on social media, warning that strict action will be taken against those spreading false information. He added that anyone who encounters suspicious content should first report it to the police.

Actor shared video

Actor Duniya Vijay shared the video on his Facebook account, noting that his movie *Bheema* had raised awareness about ganja and Tydol tablets. He mentioned reports of a new "zombie drug" allegedly reaching Bengaluru, urging youth to stay cautious and parents to remain vigilant. He also requested the police to clarify the claims and appealed to the public to report any similar incidents.

Happy Streets returns to Bhartiya City with lively line-up

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Happy Streets by The Times of India continues its vibrant run at Bhartiya City for the third week on Sunday, April 12, promising residents another morning filled with energy, wellness and entertainment.

BHIMA presents HAPPY streets — OUR ROADS. OUR WAY.

This edition brings together a curated mix of fitness, music and interactive activities for all age groups. The morning will begin on a calming note with meditation by Heartfulness, followed by yoga and pranayama sessions by Sarvebhavanthu Sukhinah Yoga, setting the tone for a refreshing start. The tempo then rises with a high-intensity workout and fitness dance session by Swingers Dance Inc.

Presenting sponsor Bhima Jewellers will host an interactive crowd quiz with exciting giveaways. Music enthusiasts can look forward to a lively band performance by Mic & Melody, while aspiring singers can participate in singing training sessions by From Mug to Mic.

Dance performances will be the highlight, featuring The Hustle Dance Academy, V7 Dance Studio and PK Dance Academy. Iskcon HBR will present kirtan and dance, blending devotion with celebration. With its diverse and inclusive programming, Happy Streets continues to offer Bhartiya City residents a joyful Sunday morning experience.

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We, Mr. SYED AZAM, son of Mr. G Syed Ismail. Flat #2, 20 Khader Nawaz Khan Road, Nungam Bakkam, Chennai 600006 Mr. D. SYED NOORUL HASAN, S/o. late Mr. D. Syed Abbas, & Late Mrs Mallika Begum residing at Flat No. 1072, Spencer Heights, Spencer Road, Frazer Town, Bangalore-5 Joint owners have lost the following documents
(1). Release Deed Document No.2170/83-84, dated 21-11-1983, Volume 2285. Pages 87-90.
(2). Release Deed Document No. 126/2010-11, dated 21-04-2010, Stored in CD No. SHVD111.
(3). Cancellation of Release Deed Document No. 5242/2015-16, dated 08-02-2016, Stored in CD No. SHVD221. (4). Rectification of JDA Deed Document No. 5243/2015-16, dated 08-02-2016, Stored in CD No. SHVD221.
(5). GPA Document No. 491/ 2015-16, dated 08-02-2016, Stored in CD No. SHVD221.
The finder of the said documents may kindly contact the above address given hereunder. Public are also hereby warned not to have any transaction with anybody based on the said original deeds. If anybody misuses the same in any manner whatsoever, he or she will be held legally responsible.

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SIREESHA VETCHA, R/O BENGALURU, HAVE CHANGED BY NAME FROM SIREESHA VETCHA TO SIREESHA MOCHARLA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

I, Patel Alok Ashutoshkumar, S/o Prasad Ashutosh, residing at 162A, 18th Main Road, Sector 3, HSR Layout, Bengaluru 560102, hereby declare that I am also known as Patel Alokkumar Ashutoshbhai as per my educational documents. Both names refer to one and the same person. Henceforth, I shall be known as Patel Alok Ashutoshkumar for all purposes.

I, Manjma Prajit spouse of Prajit Babu resident of No. 12/A-287, 2nd Cross, Hennur Main Road, Chinnappa Layout near BDS Garden, PO Kothanur, Bengaluru 560077, have changed my name from Manjma Prajit to Manjma HK vide affidavit dtd 08/04/26 before Notary public Bengaluru court.

I, Priya D, D/o David A D and W/o Vijay Kumar Jutke, R/o No. 15, Christ Calvary BLDG, GNR 2nd CRS, BDA RD, Near Diamond CLG, K.R. Puram, Bangalore - 560036, have changed my name from Priya D to Priya. Henceforth, I shall be known as Priya for all future purposes.vide affidavit dated 06.02.2026 sworn before notary G Rajendra BENGALURU

I, EVANGELIN R/o No.2, Agnest, 1st Main Road, 1st Cross, Vivekananda Road, RM Nagar, Bengaluru-560016. I have changed my name to EVANGELIN BABU SANKARAN. For all my document purpose. Vide Dated from Embassy of India 29/03/2026.

I, SUNITHA, w/o N. Srinath Shindhe, R/a#14, 4th Main Road, Bhuneshwarinagar, Sultanpalya Main Road, R.T Nagar Post, Bangalore-560032. I, have Changed my name to SUNITHA. S, Vide affidavit, dated 13/02/2026 Sworn before Notary: Leela, Bengaluru.

I, Jaffer Shariff R S/o Late Rizwan Shariff R/o Flat No. 21404, Nikoo Homes-I, Bharthiya City, Chokkanahilli, Bangalore-560064 have changed my name from Jaffer Shariff R to Jaffer Shariff for all future purposes.

I, M. MANOHARA REDDY, aged 48, r/s 407, Radiant Daffodils, Kalkere Main Road, Horamavu,Bangalore 560113, have changed my name M. MANOHAR REDDY vide affidavit dated 09/04/26 before notary N. Narayana Swamy, Bangalore.

I, Hajeemiyan Alias Nawab Alias Nawab Jan K, R/O 108/1A, Narappakunte ,MG Road, Chintamani-563125 Chikkaballapur Dist, Have Changed My Name As Hajeemiya Khadar S/O Abdul Khadar

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Do not look for healing at the feet of those who broke you - Anjali Rana

Supporting a safer gold purchase experience this Akshay Tritiya

IAGES aims to make a lasting dent in improving consumer safety in gold jewellery transactions

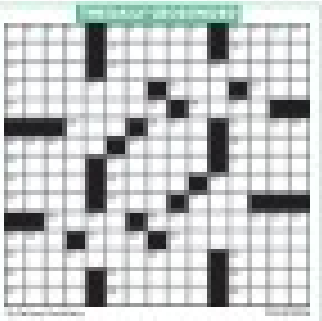
The optics of unmarrying

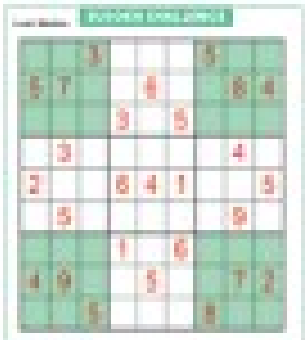
POV

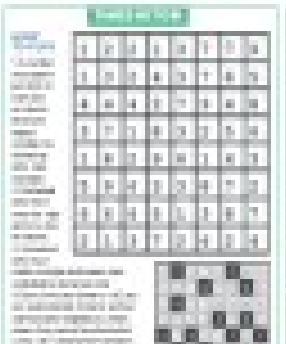
Pershing Square proposes $64BN merger deal with Universal Music

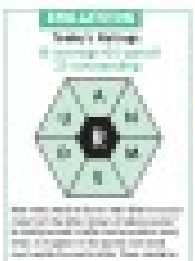
Bizarre

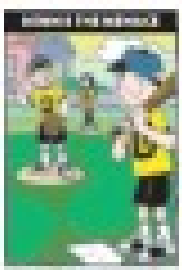
FEMA official claims he 'teleported' to Waffle House

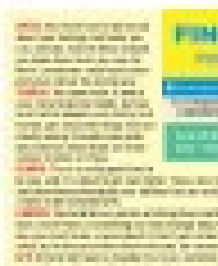


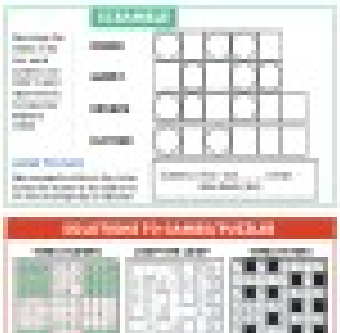












Voting in K'taka bypolls brisk amid scorching heat, stray flashpoints

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Davanagere/Bagalkot: Intense heat, briefs moments of tension and complaints over facilities failed to dent voter enthusiasm as electors flocked to polling booths in byelections to Bagalkot and Davanagere South assembly seats. In Davanagere South, turnout stood at 68.4%, slightly lower than the 69.5% recorded in the 2023 assembly elections. In contrast, Bagalkot registered a turnout of 68.7%, a marginal increase from 68.5% in 2023.

Agencies

RUSH TO GET INKED: An elderly woman poses after exercising her franchise in Davanagere South constituency, while (above) women wait to cast their votes at a pink polling station in Bagalkot

DANCE OF DEMOCRACY

Voting began on a brisk note in both segments, with long queues seen outside polling stations, especially in Davanagere South. In Bagalkot, BJP candidate Veeranna Charantimath's son Naveen was among the early voters. However, turnout slowed after 11am as temperatures rose.

The bypolls were necessitated by the deaths of senior Congress legislators HY Meti and Shamanur Shivashankarappa. Congress fielded their family members — Umesh Meti in Bagalkot and Samarth Shamanur in Davanagere South — while BJP nominated Charantimath and Srinivas T Dasakariyappa respectively.

Polling day witnessed a clash between Congress and SDPI workers near Basha Nagar Main Road in Davanagere. The confrontation occurred outside a booth at Millat School after Congress workers objected to a table allegedly set up by SDPI agents, pointing out that it infringed on the permitted distance rule. The row escalated when the table was overturned, leading to a scuffle. Police intervened and brought the situation under control. No injuries were reported.

Allegations of cash distribution surfaced in parts of Bagalkot, triggering tension. A group of people surrounded a car belonging to Congress member Santosh Hokarani, alleging money was being distributed. Hokarani got down from the vehicle and spoke to the crowd, after which the situation eased.

In Bagalkot, voters at a polling station in Aminagad complained of poor arrangements, including lack of drinking water and shade. An elderly woman collapsed while waiting in the queue. Locals rushed her to a hospital for treatment and later raised concerns with officials over preparedness.

A total of 34 candidates was in the fray across the two seats, including 25 in Davanagere South. More than 2,500 police personnel were deployed to maintain order.

While Congress is seeking to retain both seats, BJP is attempting to wrest them in what is a direct contest between the two parties. SDPI is also in the fray. Votes will be counted on May 4.

VOTING GLITCH HOLDS UP POLLS

Polling at booth 322 in Bagalkot was disrupted, albeit briefly, after one Hanumanth Rao Joshi alleged his vote had already been cast. Officials later found his son's name had been mistakenly marked by polling staff. After verification, Joshi was allowed to vote. The incident caused temporary confusion, with voters having to wait for some time. Polling officials also asked mediapersons to step out while the matter was examined and resolved.

PAYBACK TIME FOR GOA MIGRANTS

Some 80 voters from Madapur village in Bagalkot constituency travelled in two mini buses from Goa, where they now work, to cast their vote. They said their "leader" from their village had helped them during the pandemic by providing food. "Now, we have returned to cast our votes," they said.

CHICKEN VOTE

A video from Davanagere showed BJP functionaries questioning children carrying a chicken. In the clip, the children purportedly say Congress workers gave it to them. The functionary tells them to take benefits from Congress but vote for BJP.

CASH ROW

A widely shared video allegedly shows Congress workers distributing cash in Navanagar which triggered a controversy. Footage shows crowds gathering with chits seeking money. BJP candidate Veeranna Charantimath accused Congress of influencing voters through money and muscle power and said he would complain. However, no formal complaint was filed with election authorities at the time.

Highway story: ₹43k-cr spent in 5 yrs, ₹16k-cr toll collected

Sandeep.Moudgal
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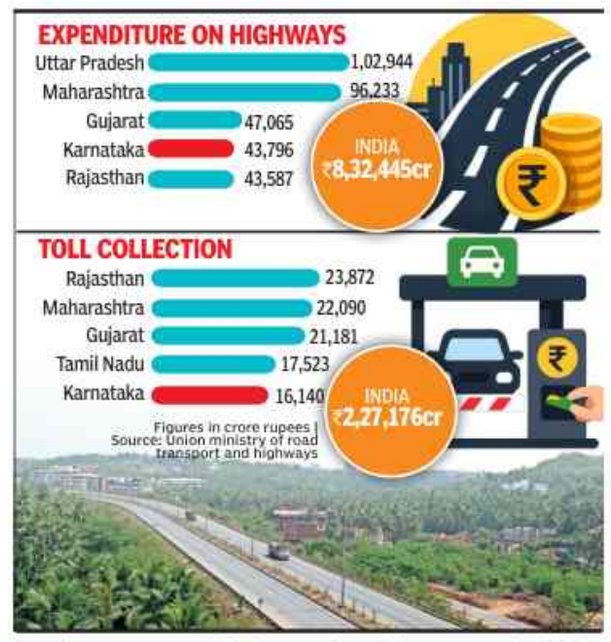

Bengaluru: The Centre, over the past five years, spent Rs 43,796 crore on developing and maintaining national highways in Karnataka, placing the state fourth in the country after Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar, data tabled in Parliament by Nitin Gadkari, road transport and highways minister, revealed.

While Rs 1 lakh crore and Rs 96,000 crore were spent in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra respectively, officials say Karnataka's allocation largely reflects expansion rather than upkeep. NHAI officials in the state said most projects are executed under build-operate-transfer (BOT) and hybrid annuity models, limiting direct govt spending on maintenance.

"The only area where expenditure is incurred is in EPC contracts," said Vilas P Brahmankar, NHAI regional officer. Karnataka has around 8,000km of national highways, which officials say justifies the scale of investment.

However, the ministry has flagged 67 problematic stretches nationwide, two of which are in Karnataka.

A portion along NH 948 between Bandipur Tiger Reserve and Bengaluru saw a 10-metre stretch collapse in 2025 and is now under repair based on recommendations from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.

More serious was the collapse of three spans on the Kaali bridge along NH 66 in 2024, a key link between the Goa-Karnataka border and Kundapur. The contractor involved was debarred the same year.

On the revenue side, Karnataka collected Rs 16,140 crore in toll fees over five years, with collections rising to Rs 4,320 crore in 2024-25 alone. The state ranks fifth in toll revenue, behind Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

In shambles

However, data also suggests a widening gap between highway expansion and maintenance, even as user fee collections continue to climb. "Several stretches on highways are either incomplete or in shambles, defeating the whole purpose of constructing such highways," an official said.

Surveys over, B'luru-Mys rail corridor set for quadrupling

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Key surveys for the proposed quadrupling of Bengaluru-Mysuru rail corridor have been completed, with the railways department now advancing preparation of a detailed project report (DPR) to enhance capacity on the busy route.

As part of a broader infrastructure push, four key stations — Kengeri, Ramanagara, Channapatna and Mandya — are being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme at a cost of over Rs 80 crore. The upgrades aim to improve passenger amenities and modernise facilities. The tentative deadline for completion is mid-2026.

On Thursday, Union minister HD Kumaraswamy and minister of state for railways V Somanna conducted a window trailing inspection of the 138km stretch, reviewing works at multiple locations.

New Maddur station

Kumaraswamy said steps have been taken to ensure the Wodeyar Express stops at Ramanagara, a move that would benefit locals. He said there are demands for a new railway station at Maddur, as the existing facility is located far from the town and faces constraints in handling heavy footfall. The current station is over 100 years old.

Railway officials are expected to visit the area soon and identify suitable land for the proposed station. At Nidaghatta, farmers and locals urged the ministers to construct a railway underpass, while at several locations, the public sought elimination of level crossings.

Somanna said five road over bridges (ROBs) and one road under bridge have been sanctioned along the route. Of these, the ROB on the Bengaluru–Kengeri section and the one at Channapatna Yard have been completed, while work on the others is on.

SIDDARAMAIAH IS OBSTRUCTING NEW RAILWAY LINE: SOMANNA

WINDOW VIEW: Ministers V Somanna and HD Kumaraswamy inspect work along the B'luru-Mysuru rail corridor on Thursday

Union minister of state for railways V Somanna accused CM Siddaramaiah of obstructing progress of the proposed Kanakapura-Malavalli railway line, while insisting efforts will continue to find solutions and improve overall transport connectivity in the region. Somanna alleged that despite the Union govt prioritising the project, Siddaramaiah wrote to the Centre saying the state govt lacked the financial resources needed and requested that it be halted. Somanna said the Centre is ready to move forward with the project if the state agrees.

With drought on horizon, Karnataka may pivot to short-duration crops

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Bengaluru: A likely transition from La Niña to El Niño this year has raised concerns of below-normal rainfall in Karnataka, prompting early signals of a shift in farm strategy towards short-duration crops.

Experts say the outlook, while preliminary, could influence sowing decisions as the early kharif season begins in mid-April, ahead of the main cycle in June.

Dr MN Thimmegowda, professor and head of agrometeorology at University of Agricultural Sciences, GKVK, said the concern stems from the "El Niño–southern oscillation", a climate pattern linked to temperature changes in the Pacific Ocean.

"Since 2019, we were under the La Niña effect. This year, we are shifting towards El Niño," he said, explaining that warming in the eastern Pacific reduces rainfall across parts of Asia, including India. He cautioned that the assessment remains tentative, with clearer forecasts expected later in April.

PTI

HANDFUL: Farmers may move from crops like ragi (in pic) to green gram and horse gram

For farmers, the immediate implication could be a move towards crops that require less water and mature faster. Agriculture department officials said in case of a rainfall deficit, advisories typically favour short-duration crops such as leafy vegetables and pulses like green gram and horse gram, which can be harvested in under 70 days.

These are seen as safer alternatives to longer-duration crops such as tur, groundnut, jowar, ragi, and maize, which require over 90 days and are more vulnerable to prolonged dry spells.

Mitigating water stress

GT Puthra, director of agriculture, said there is no formal declaration of drought yet. "We follow crop contingency plans prepared by ICAR's Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture, which are district-specific and activated during floods or droughts," he said.

Even as the seasonal outlook evolves, the govt said it is focusing on structural measures to mitigate water stress. Relief commissioner and principal secretary Munish Moudgil said investments are being scaled up to improve water availability.

"Last year, Rs 100 crore was allocated from the disaster mitigation fund for farm ponds. This year, Rs 150 crore has been provided to farmers through the agriculture department to create water-harvesting structures," Moudgil said.

He added that large-scale projects are underway to augment groundwater recharge, including a Rs 500-crore initiative to channel treated sewage water to Kolar and a Rs 650-crore project in parts of Chikkaballapur to supply water to dry regions.

SHORT TAKES

Dalit groups protest Sarma's remarks

Dalit groups in Mallikarjun Kharge's hometown Kalaburagi protested alleged remarks by Himanta Biswa Sarma, seeking action. The row follows Kharge's speech in Assam comparing BJP and RSS to a "poisonous snake". Karnataka Congress defended Kharge, accusing BJP of politicising his remarks. KPCC communications chief Ramesh Babu said democracy allows criticism and alleged BJP was targeting Kharge and his son Priyank for political gain.

KRS workers booked for obstructing police

Tumakuru police filed an FIR against three Karnataka Rashtra Samithi party workers for allegedly creating a ruckus and obstructing police during home minister G Parameshwara's Janata Darshan programme. The trio was booked under several sections of BNS including section 132 (assault or use of criminal force to deter a public servant). The incident occurred when Parameshwara allegedly objected to one of them recording a video while the workers submitted a petition.

HC warns against contempt of court

▸ Continued from page 1 (Other book)

The court warned that violation of its order or breach of undertakings would be treated with "utmost seriousness" and could amount to "aggravated contempt", inviting legal action against the DC.

The dispute dates to a petition filed in 2024 by Pramoda Devi Wadiyar, who challenged the constitution of Shree Chamundeshwari Kshetra Development Authority through legislation. She has alleged the move was aimed at divesting her rights over the temple. In Oct 2024, the HC directed that no action be taken without its prior approval, effectively restraining the state govt from unilateral decisions on the temple. On Jan 14, 2026, the court barred any construction at the site.

Despite directions, the court noted that photographs submitted before it indicate that permanent structures had been built at the premises in violation of its earlier orders.

Free root canals brought under Ayushman Bharat

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: In a move aimed at improving access to affordable dental care, the state govt has approved the inclusion of root canal treatment (RCT) under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana-Chief Minister's Arogya Karnataka (AB PMJAY-CM's ArK) scheme.

This means that the eligible beneficiaries can get RCT for free in govt and empanelled dental health facilities. govt order observed that a significant number of patients are opting for tooth extraction instead of root canal due to high treatment costs and lack of awareness. Root canal treatment involves removing infected pulp tissue and sealing the tooth to prevent further infection and will help patients save their natural teeth. "Inclusion of RCT will promote tooth preservation, improve oral health and reduce avoidable extractions," the order said.

Both priority and non-priority households will now be able to avail RCT procedures under the state's health insurance scheme. Anterior and posterior root canal treatments will be covered under the dental and oral and maxillofacial surgery speciality under the scheme. Initially, the govt capped the rollout at 50,000 cases or a total expenditure of Rs 5 crore, whichever is lower. The Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust (SAST), which implements the scheme, will fix the cost at Rs 1,360 for anterior RCT and Rs 2,040 for posterior RCT. The package cost will cover all consumables and procedure-related expenses, in line with existing scheme guidelines.

Officials: New system will do away with queues

▸ Continued from page 1 (Other book)

Kartavya' devices, currently installed at key locations such as Vidhana Soudha, Vikasa Soudha and M S Building, will facilitate AI-enabled attendance system. Other offices can request similar facilities to be installed at their premises.

Officials said the system has already been piloted in departments such as health, education and the Legislative Assembly Secretariat, where it delivered positive results. So far, more than 1.3 lakh staff from 51 departments have registered on the platform.

For employees, this switch will do away with the need to queue up at office entry points to get their attendance registered, while introducing stricter location-based verification.

KAAMS uses AI and geo-tagging to enable real-time tracking, allowing staff to log attendance from their place of posting or while on assignments.

"KAAMS is more cost-effective compared to the biometric system. Employees can also mark attendance from their place of deputation," said Bhoobalan T, CEO of the Centre for e-Governance.

To support the rollout, all govt offices have been instructed to provide geo-coordinates and integrate their databases with the KAAMS platform. The e-Governance department will oversee the integration, while departments must appoint nodal officers to manage the implementation.

Search continues for missing Kerala girl

Chikkamagaluru: Search operations for 16-year-old Srinandhana, from Kerala, who went missing from Chandradrona Hills in Chikkamagaluru Tuesday, continued for the third day.

Police, along with personnel from the forest department, fire and emergency services, and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been scouring the area since Tuesday night, but even after 48 hours, the class 10 student could not be traced, police said.

The girl, along with her family members from Pallakad, was on a trip to Karnataka as part of a 40-member team, when she went missing.

Police have deployed thermal drone cameras in the search operations.

An officer said: "Rescue teams have spread out all over the region. All sensitive areas are being tracked." TNN

Man stabbed as bar brawl turns violent

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

A group of four men followed the brothers, with one attacking Imran. When Saifulla intervened, he was stabbed but is out of danger

Bengaluru: A late-night outing at a bar turned into a nightmare for two men after a confrontation escalated into a violent knife attack near Opera Junction in the early hours of April 7.

The complainant, 30-year-old mechanic Mohammed Saifulla from Kalasipalya, told police that he and his brother Imran went to a bar on Residency Road around 11pm on April 6 with two friends. While drinking, a group of men allegedly began harassing them with intimidating stares, creating tension inside the bar.

Although Saifulla and his group avoided confrontation, the situation escalated after their friends left around 12.45am. Around 1am, as Saifulla and Imran walked toward the parking area, the same group reportedly reignited the argument.

Sensing trouble and spotting a Hoysala police vehicle approaching, the brothers left on their two-wheeler and headed toward Opera Junction. At 1.30am, while Saifulla was trying to book a cab home and Imran was on his way to his residence in RT Nagar, the confrontation took a violent turn.

A group of four men who were at the bar got down from a white Swift car, which allegedly followed them and stopped behind their bike. One of the accused reportedly slapped Imran. When Saifulla intervened, one among the group stabbed the complainant in the chest with a knife. Another attacker stabbed him near the ear and on the right side of his face, leaving him seriously injured.

On noticing police approaching the area, the accused fled in the car. Saifulla was rushed to the hospital, and he is out of risk. A case of attempt to murder has been registered by Ashok Nagar police, and an attacker identified as Zabiullah was arrested Wednesday.

TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026

PERPETRATORS OF BOMB ATTACK THAT KILLED 2 KIDS WILL BE IDENTIFIED SOON: MANIPUR CM KHEMCHAND

ANDHRA CM NAIDU TO DEDICATE INDIA'S FIRST DESI, OPEN-ACCESS QUANTUM COMPUTERS ON APRIL 14

'Rights of deities can't be violated through judicial scrutiny': Govt

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New Delhi: Govt told SC Thursday the Constitution protects full range of religious diversity and recognises that internal groupings, each different from the other in terms of practices and beliefs, are integral to the larger religious traditions that include rights of deities and attributes invested in them by devotees.

'RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS CAN'T TRUMP CUSTOMS'

Additional solicitor general K M Nataraj told the nine-judge bench that while Article 25 of Constitution secures individual freedom of conscience and religious practice, Article 26 protects collective autonomy of religious denominations, and both needed to be harmoniously interpreted, as these are sides of the same coin bound by concept of religion.

Indirectly faulting the Sabarimala verdict that ruled in favour of an individual woman's right to enter the temple by quashing curbs on entry of women of menstruating age, Nataraj said in many judgments, including Ram Janmabhoomi case, SC had recognised the distinct rights of a deity based on the faith and belief of devotees. "The rights of deities, which are juristic persons, can't be violated through judicial scrutiny, and rights of individuals cannot trump devotee-endorsed customs based on attributes of deities," he said. The meaning and context of 'religious denomination', as has been interpreted by SC over the past decades, required reconsideration using the texture of civilisational, religious and social context in which the Constitution operated, he said.

Vaidyanathan said, "The term 'religion' or 'religious denomination' should not be understood in the Abrahamic concept of organised religion, more so, when the concept of 'Hinduism' as a religion is a more recent colonial construct. We always understand it to be a way of life or 'dharma'."

SC: Hindu society will be divided if temples have sect-based curbs

'Should Be Open To All Professing Same Broad Religion'

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@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Supreme Court on Thursday warned that Hindu society would be vivisected if temples belonging to different denominations or sects are turned into exclusive preserves of their community members and are rendered out of bounds for those who may not be members of a particular community but follow one of the diverse faiths under the broad canopy of Hinduism.

The remark came from a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, A G Masih, P B Varale, R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi when senior advocate C S Vaidyanthan, appearing for three religious bodies, overzealously said each religious denomination can have its own distinct custom making

File photo

Advocate for 3 religious bodies attempted to justify his arguments by citing examples of family-run private temples, with which SC disagreed

temples exclusive to its followers and can even restrict entry of those belonging to other denominations.

The bench, which had prima facie appeared to subscribe to the thumb rule that constitutional courts can test validity of a religious custom or norm on the touchstone of "public order, health and morality", protested aloud, almost in unison, when Vaidyanathan argued customs and rules framed by a community to which a temple belongs can't be interfered with by govt or courts given the sanctity of Article 26 of the Constitution.

Quoting from 1954 judgment in Ratilal Panachand Gandhi case, he said the court had ruled that "no outside authority has any right to say that these are not essential parts of religion and is not open to the secular authority of the State to restrict or prohibit them in any manner..."

Vaidyanthan, citing Shirur Mutt judgment of 1954, added, "A religious denomination or organisation enjoys complete autonomy in the matter of deciding as to what rites and ceremonies are essential according to the tenets of the religion they hold and no outside authority has any jurisdiction to interfere." The intensity of the argument drew loud protests from the CJI and Justices Nagarathna, Sundresh, Kumar and Varale.

"Everybody under the broad canopy of one religion must have access to all temples and 'mutts'. 'Mutts' and temples of one sect cannot be exclusively for the members of that sect. It will have a deleterious impact on Hinduism," Justice Nagarathna said. Justices Sundresh and Kumar said it would divide Hindu society.

Vaidyanathan attempted to justify his arguments by citing examples of family-run private temples. "If any denomination or sect wants to restrict entry to outsiders, it would be based on that community's religious decision, and it cannot be faulted," he said. SC disagreed. Justice Nagarathna said it would be incongruous and improper if followers of Kanchi Mutt are barred from entering Sringeri Mutt. "We understand the concept of a denomination's religious autonomy, but don't pitch it so high," she said.

SG presents in court 6 instances of 'reverse discrimination'

▶ Continued from page 1

Mehta said the Sabarimala judgment proceeds on the basis of the assumption that women are treated inferior to men by the temple's custom, even though devotees believe in the custom given the 'naistik brahmachari' attributes of the deity which require him to keep his distance from women of menstruating age. "I have given several instances where there is reverse discrimination. But devotees accept customs and adhere to it without protest as they respect the attributes attached to the deities concerned."

The SG presented six instances where reverse discriminatory customs are intrinsic to temples, and interestingly this customary restriction on entry of men is practiced in three temples in Kerala where the Sabarimala temple is situated.

■ The Attukal Bhagavathy Temple, in Kerala which worships women, has made it to the Guinness Book of World Records for hosting the Pongal festival, which sees around three million women participate. Men are not allowed to enter the temple that sees the largest gathering of women during the festival.

■Chakkulathukavu Temple: Another temple in Kerala that worships Goddess Bhagavathi and observes an annual ritual called 'Naari Puja', during which the male priest washes the feet of women devotees, who have been fasting for 10 days, on the first Friday of December. The day is called Dhanu. During 'Naari Puja', only women are allowed to enter the temple.

■Kottankulangara Sree Devi Temple in Chavara, Kollam District, Kerala: Here men adorn themselves in women's attire to show their devotion to Mother Goddess. It is called the tradition of 'Chamayavilakku'. This event is an ultimate display of faith where men meticulously shave, go to beauty parlours and apply make-up, don colourful sarees and go to seek blessings of the mother goddess.

■Lord Brahma Temple: This 14th-century temple, located in Pushkar in Rajasthan, prohibits married men from entering its premises.

■Bhagwati Maa Temple Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu: This temple, located in Kanyakumari, worships Kanye Maa Bhagawati Durga. The goddess is also known as the Goddess of Sanyasa. Due to these reasons, sanyasi men are allowed till the gate of the temple, while married men are prohibited from entering the premises.

■Mata Temple, Muzaffarpur, Bihar: During a particular period, men are strictly prohibited to enter this temple, including the male priest. Only women are allowed to enter the temple during that period.

HC: Staring at colleague's chest misconduct not voyeurism

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Bombay HC quashed a 2015 FIR against a senior executive of an insurance company. It said the allegations 'do not fit into the narrow mould of Section 354C'

Mumbai: Bombay high court has quashed and set aside a 2015 FIR and terminated all further proceedings against a senior executive who was booked for voyeurism for allegedly staring at a female colleague's chest. "The allegation is only that he stared at her chest during office meetings. Unwanted staring, even if accepted as true, is not the same thing as voyeurism within the meaning of Section 354C. The statute can't be stretched beyond its plain words," Justice Amit Borkar said Wednesday.

IPC Section 354C punishes a man who watches or takes image of a woman engaging in a private act in circumstances where she would usually expect not to be observed.

The applicant (then 39) was assistant vice president of a private insurance company. The complainant (then 24) was a deputy sales manager. During work he used to insult her, avoid normal eye contact and instead "stared" at her chest and made inappropriate comments. When she saw him staring at her chest during a Nov 2014 office meeting, she told her superior who informed higher-ups. Subsequently he began finding fault with her work. The company issued notice to her and threatened to terminate her service. This led to her complaint. The applicant was arrested on April 9, 2015, and released on bail.

The applicant's advocate Amol Patankar said prima facie, the FIR does not attract Section 354C. Justice Borkar said 354C is not a "general provision covering every form of offensive gaze or bad behaviour towards a woman." It applies "where a man watches or captures a woman engaging in a private act, in circumstances where she would usually not expect to be seen by the perpetrator..." "The foundation of the offence is therefore intrusion into privacy in a private setting, or recording and circulation of such a private act," Justice Borkar explained.

Prosecutor Yogesh Nakhwa and the woman's advocate Ajinkya Udane relied on witnesses' statements to say such conduct constitutes an offence affecting a woman's modesty and therefore attracts 354C.

Patankar said his client was exonerated by internal complaints committee under Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act. HC said even if the clean chit report is kept aside, "the criminal case would still fail for want of basic ingredients of Section 354C." "Criminal law is not meant to be used to convert every workplace grievance into an offence of voyeurism."

He said alleged staring at the chest, insulting behaviour and workplace harassment "may at the highest amount to misconduct, indecency, or some other wrong...but they don't fit into narrow mould of Section 354C."

Lawyer's claim based on client's directive not defamation: HC

Chennai: No lawyer can be prosecuted for defamation in respect of any statements made based on the client's instructions, Madras high court clarified Thursday, **reports Sureshkumar K**.

A lawyer is an advocate who speaks on behalf of another person. Naturally, beyond the instructions given by the client, a lawyer has no opportunity to verify the truth or falsity of the facts given, HC observed, while quashing a criminal defamation complaint filed by a man against an advocate representing his wife in a matrimonial dispute.

The husband stated that he had filed a petition in a family court seeking a declaration that his marriage was null and void. As a counterblast, his wife, with alleged connivance and instigation of the advocate, filed a complaint under Pocso Act against him, he claimed. The man alleged that even before the complaint was taken on file, his wife disseminated the false allegations, publishing the same in newspapers. But the Pocso court dismissed the complaint.

The husband then filed criminal defamation complaints against his wife and her advocate. Allowing the plea moved by the lawyer, HC quashed the defamation complaint against him but refused to quash the complaint against the wife.

'Rules for pedestrians too': Bombay HC upholds shared negligence in road mishap

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HC said Indians must develop civic sense and obey road rules at home just as they do abroad

Mumbai: Bombay high court on Wednesday, upholding a decade-old order of equal contributory negligence in a priest with Parkinson's getting knocked down by a bus of Thane Municipal Transport Corporation (TMCT), called for discipline and rule-following among pedestrians and motorists.

"It is high time that we, as responsible citizens, follow the rules and regulations while crossing the road and by following signals. Merely because no vehicles are coming from either side, people should not cross the road when the signals clearly show that they are not supposed to cross the road," said Justice Jitendra Jain on April 8.

The victim suffered from Parkinson's and was partially paralytic, the HC said, adding such a person would be prone to a fall and should have been accompanied by someone when crossing a busy road. He crossed where there was no signal, and "therefore, to some extent, the negligence certainly is attributable to" the victim, it noted and said even the bus driver should have realised that a person was limping and should have been more careful. "Though he had applied the brakes, it was too late," HC said. The family sought Rs 1 lakh for 4-month suffering, and HC, saying such "suffering can't be ignored", awarded Rs 50,000.

HC: Passport renewal legitimate right of holder, can't be denied over suspicion

Rajesh Kumar Pandey | TNN

Prayagraj: Allahabad high court has ruled that renewal of a passport is the legitimate right of a person and it cannot be denied on the basis of apprehension or suspicion of govt authorities about the applicant.

Justice Saurabh Srivastava passed the order while setting aside the order of additional chief judicial magistrate (CJM), Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, who rejected the application of one Dilip seeking renewal of his passport.

The court, in its April 7 order, directed the regional passport officer concerned to renew the petitioner's passport without delay.

Dilip, a native of Rampur, is settled in Saudi Arabia and wanted to return to India to appear before the court of the Rampur chief judicial ma-

'RENEW SANS DELAY'

gistrate in connection with a criminal case where a non-bailable warrant had been issued against him.

He had moved an application before additional CJM, Rampur, seeking permission for renewal of his passport, but the court rejected his plea in an order dated July 30, 2025. He challenged the order in the high court.

During the hearing, the state counsel said if the applicant's passport was renewed then there was no assurance or undertaking that he would return to India and appear before the court concerned.

The high court directed the ministry of external affairs, through its joint secretary (Middle East), to ensure this order is made available to the Indian embassy in Saudi Arabia so that action may be initiated after renewal of the passport to ensure the applicant's presence before the Rampur court.

Google, Meta told to remove content 'defaming' Sandesara

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New Delhi: Cautioning the media to be "extremely vigilant in combating misinformation and ensuring the accuracy of information it disseminates", a Delhi court has granted an ex parte ad-interim injunction in favour of businessman Manoj Kesarichand Sandesara.

It directed intermediaries, including Google LLC and Meta, and unidentified entities to remove allegedly defamatory online content linking him and his family to Sterling Biotech bank fraud case within 36 hours.

The court was hearing a suit invoking 'right to be forgotten', seeking damages and a permanent injunction against publication and continued circulation of what Sandesara termed as "false and disparaging" material.

As per the plea, after settlement of dues, Supreme Court last year ordered quashing of criminal cases and related investigations against the promoters in the case. Yet, Sandesara said, several media reports continued to portray him and his family as "fugitives", "fraudsters" and "money launderers".

In setback for arms consultant, HC upholds 'fugitive offender' tag

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New Delhi: Delhi high court Thursday upheld a trial court's order declaring UK-based arms consultant Sanjay Bhandari a "fugitive economic offender" in connection with a money laundering case.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna found no merit in the appeal filed on behalf of the fugitive and dismissed the same. In July 2025, a trial court had declared Bhandari a "fugitive economic offender" on a plea by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), enabling the agency to confiscate all of Bhandari's assets worth crores of rupees.

However, Bhandari's chances of coming to India have been virtually nullified after a UK court ruled against his extradition, leaving probe agencies with the option of confiscating his assets and properties.

Bhandari's legal team, while opposing ED's move to declare him a fugitive offender, claimed its "client's stay could not be called illegal in the UK as he has a legal right to reside there, and govt of India is bound by the judgment of the UK court... Bhandari is legally living there, and declaring him a 'fugitive' in that scenario is legally wrong".

The trial court said the "extradition attempt may have failed, but it will not make the accused an angel or immune from prosecution for the violation of Indian laws". Bhandari (63) had fled to London in 2016, soon after the I-T department raided him in Delhi.

ED filed its first chargesheet against Bhandari in 2020. It filed a criminal case against Bhandari and others under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in Feb 2017, taking cognisance of an I-T chargesheet filed against him under the anti-black money law of 2015.

The agency also maintained before court that the UK court's refusal to extradite Bhandari has no bearing on proceedings under Indian law. It emphasised that the core objective of the FEO Act is to compel accused persons to return to India and face the law.

ED is probing Bhandari's links with Robert Vadra, the businessman husband of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026

KUNAL KAMRA REFUSES APOLOGY OVER REMARKS ON EKNATH SHINDE, CITES PRECEDENT FOR ARTISTES

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR MEETS BHUTAN'S ENERGY MINISTER TO DISCUSS STRENGTHENING OF ENERGY TIES

HACK OF THE DAY — **DICTATE YOUR FIRST DRAFT INSTEAD OF TYPING IT**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Helps you get ideas out faster when typing is slowing you down, especially for notes, rough drafts, outlines, and meeting summaries

WHAT TO DO: Use Google Docs voice typing to speak your draft first and edit it later instead of fighting a blank page

STEPS:

1. **Open** a document in Google Docs on your computer
2. **Check** that your microphone is on and working
3. **Choose** Tools and then "Voice typing."
4. **Click** the microphone and speak clearly at a normal pace
5. **Edit** the draft after dictation instead of stopping to perfect each sentence

NOTE: This is best for first drafts, not final polish. You still need to review punctuation, names, and technical terms carefully

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

11k-litres milk poured into river

Around 11,000 litres of milk were poured into the Narmada on Wednesday at the conclusion of a 'Mahayajna' organised in Satdev village, in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district, amid a chorus of chants from priests, seers and a large gathering of devotees. Organisers said the ritualistic offering of cow milk was conducted as a symbolic gesture in hopes and prayers for clean river water, the well-being of pilgrims undertaking the Narmada Parikrama, and the happiness and prosperity of people inhabiting areas along the riverbank. The event had been underway for 21 days, during which devotees gathered daily to take part in prayers. TNN

Buxar man sends CIA message, held

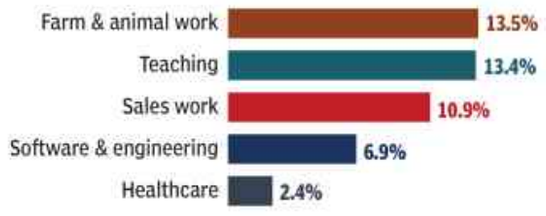
Bihar police have arrested a man in Buxar for allegedly sending a message to the United States' CIA, demanding money and offering to compromise the security of the PM. The accused, Aman Kumar, was nabbed from his house in Araria village under Simri police station area in Buxar district on Wednesday night. Police have seized his laptops and other electronic devices from his house and sealed his room. Buxar SP said, "Aman is suspected to have posted a message to the website of CIA. Probe is underway." In 2022, Aman was arrested by a joint team of Kolkata and Buxar police for threatening to hack Kolkata airport. TNN

STATOISTICS A slice of life in numbers

More graduates farm the land than write the code

Among all graduate workers in India, farming and sales dwarf software and engineering combined

Top occupations among graduate workers



Graduate workers are those with a bachelor's degree or above, with a principal occupation

Source: PLFS 2024

Fragile truce in place, India reaches out to Gulf nations

Puri Arrives In Qatar, EAM To Visit UAE

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

India-flagged LPG vessel Green Asha docks at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) in Navi Mumbai after crossing the Strait of Hormuz

New Delhi: With a fragile ceasefire in place in West Asia, India is looking to renew engagement with the Gulf through visits by external affairs minister S Jaishankar to the UAE and petroleum and natural gas minister Hardeep Singh Puri to Qatar. India welcomed the ceasefire between Iran and US-Israel, hoping it would restore vessel movement through the key Strait of Hormuz.

While Puri is on a two-day visit to Doha, Jaishankar will arrive in the UAE on Saturday to deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership with India's key Gulf partner. Both countries are vital energy suppliers for India, UAE being the fourth largest source for crude oil and second largest source for LNG and LPG. Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG to India, accounting for over 40% of its global LNG imports.

Puri is the first Indian minister to visit the Gulf since the conflict began on Feb 28. He was received by India's ambassador to Qatar and officials of QatarEnergy, the state-owned petroleum and natural gas company.

The visit is significant as India seeks to secure energy supplies with shipping through the Strait of Hormuz set to resume. Sujata Sharma, joint secretary in the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, however, said details of discussions will be known once he returns.

India imports nearly 50% of its liquefied natural gas (LNG) and about 60% of LPG, with a large share coming from Doha. The conflict disrupted supplies routed via the Strait of Hormuz, which remained shut for nearly a month.

India has major long-term contracts with QatarEnergy for LNG supplies, including a 17-year deal with Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation for 1 million tonne per annum (MTPA) starting 2026, and a 20-year extension with Petronet LNG for 7.5 MTPA from 2028 to 2048. Iranian strikes last month caused extensive damage to QatarEnergy's Ras Laffan Industrial City, the world's largest LNG facility, cutting output by 17% (12.8 million tonne), triggering a global supply disruption.

With just an hour to go, Congress pulls out of Baramati race

Anurag Bende & Vijay V Singh | TNN

Pune/Mumbai: Just an hour was left for withdrawal of nominations on Thursday when the Congress finally responded to requests from the Pawar family and the Mahayuti partners and dropped its candidate against NCP chief and deputy chief minister **Sunetra Pawar** in the Baramati bye-election.

Twenty-two independent candidates still remain in the contest, but now there is no major challenge to the widow of Ajit Pawar, whose death in an aeroplane crash on Jan 28 has necessitated the bypoll.

Polling is to be conducted on April 23 and votes will be counted on May 4.

Chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, Sunetra Pawar, and NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule and MLA Rohit Pawar spoke to Congress seniors to persuade the party not to field a candidate in Baramati, a constituency Ajit Pawar had been representing since 1991.

Even NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar, who had earlier said the Congress was not wrong in contesting the Baramati bypoll, now advised his alliance partner to withdraw.

"Maharashtra lost a talented politician like Ajit Pawar. The Baramati seat fell vacant due to a tragic accident and against this backdrop, my advice to the Congress would be to not contest the seat. It is a national party and we can at most appeal to them. Ultimately, it must decide," Sharad Pawar said.

Rohit Pawar met state Congress chief Harshwardhan Sapkal in Mumbai requesting withdrawal, after which another delegation of NCP leaders, including MLA Sana Malik, met him for the same purpose.

Chief minister Devendra Fadnavis called Sapkal on the phone. "I requested Sapkal to follow the tradition of Maharashtra and withdraw from Baramati the way BJP did after the death of former home minister R R Patil," Fadnavis said.

Stir for closure of booze shop in Maha turns violent, 32 cops hurt

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Despite repeated appeals, villagers remained agitated and held a sit-in protest, demanding the release of the arrested

Nagpur: Tension gripped Kidangipaar, a sleepy hamlet in Maharashtra's Gondia district, 150km off Nagpur, after protests seeking closure of a country liquor shop triggered mob violence earlier this week, leaving 32 policemen injured, four of them seriously. At least 80 villagers have been named in the FIR for rioting, arson, stone-pelting and obstructing public servants on duty. A woman police officer suffered multiple fractures, sources said.

Kidangipaar, a village of 2,500 residents, has been on edge since the protest seeking liquor ban intensified last month. Women have been in the vanguard of protests, asserting that the booze outlet was ruining families, disrupting social stability and hindering development. They had warned of intensifying their stir with rasta roko, rail roko and even self-immolation if the outlet was not shut by April 10. The situation escalated on Monday (April 6) when a police team reached the house of a key protester, Santosh Donode, to arrest him and his family members on charges of assault and breach of peace.

A day earlier, a police team had visited to serve a prohibitory notice, but Donode allegedly tore it off and asked the officers to leave. When police returned on Monday to arrest him, tensions flared up. Hundreds of villagers assembled, insisting that if Donode was being arrested for demanding prohibition, the entire community should be arrested.

The protest turned violent after some demonstrators allegedly hurled stones at cops. Police resorted to lathicharge to disperse the crowd. Several villagers were also injured during the clash. Donode, his wife Vaishnavi and daughter Charulata, were arrested and remanded in four-day police custody. Senior officers, including SP Gorakh Bhamare, rushed to the spot and appealed for calm. "The state excise department has been requested to shut the outlet, considering the law and order situation," the SP said. Despite repeated appeals, villagers remained agitated and held a sit-in protest outside Amgaon police station, demanding the release of the Donode family.

Ragging gets 11 MBBS students suspended

Bijnor: Eleven second-year MBBS students of a govt medical college in UP were suspended following a "ragging" complaint filed by a first-year student, which eventually reached National Medical Commission's (NMC) anti-ragging helpline. The suspension order by the Bijnor college — which "found 11 students guilty" — came after an inquiry was held on the directions of the NMC anti-ragging panel.

In his complaint, the first-year medical student claimed he was humiliated and beaten by second-year students. The incident took place around six weeks ago and the college had initially initiated an inquiry. The student later approached the NMC anti-ragging helpline.

Principal, Dr Tuhin Vashisht, on Thursday said the institution follows a "zero tolerance policy towards ragging". "Action has been taken after our internal inquiry process was complete," he added. TNN

Drunk, speeding banker hits couple on bike, kills them

Nagpur: A middle-aged couple died after an allegedly drunk bank manager crashed his speeding car into their two-wheeler early Thursday in Nagpur. Cops arrested the accused, Pankaj Dekate (47), and said he had apparently been driving rashly while looking at his cellphone when the head-on collision took place.

Police identified the deceased as Vijay Savarkar (53) and his wife, Surekha (48), residents of Harihar Nagar. The couple were returning home from a family function when the accident occurred on Besa Road. Eyewitnesses described the scene as chaotic. The two-wheeler was left mangled, and debris remained scattered across the road. The couple had no chance to react to the oncoming car that allegedly swerved into their path, a local source said. Passers-by rushed the grievously injured duo to the GMCH, where they were declared dead.

Police registered an FIR under relevant sections of BNS and Motor Vehicles Act for drunk driving. Forensic experts were called to the spot, and electronic evidence was collected. The vehicle was seized, and an investigation was underway to confirm blood alcohol levels and mobile usage at the time of the accident, cops stated. A detailed probe, including CCTV footage analysis, witness statements and forensic reports, was underway. TNN

7 held, 30 people injured in clashes in multiple Assam constituencies

▶ Continued from page 1

In Assam, participation surged unevenly. Muslim-majority constituencies led the spike, with Dalgaon in Darrang district recording 94.5% turnout and 15 similar constituencies crossing 90%. Upper Assam's Hindu-majority belt logged about 82%, below the state average and slightly lower than 2021. Bodo areas averaged 85%, Barak valley 82.9%, while hill districts of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao recorded the lowest at 74.2%.

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma called the participation "not ordinary but historic", and projected a sweeping mandate. "I think we will secure 90-plus seats (in 126-member assembly). Even if we touch 100, there is nothing to be surprised about," he said.

Assam's single-phase elections were marked by sporadic clashes in multiple constituencies, leaving around 30 people wounded and seven arrested. In Kerala, voters turned out despite heat, pushing several districts past 80%. Queues continued past official closing time. Prominent politicians, including CM Pinarayi Vijayan, Congress's V D Satheesan, and BJP's Rajeev Chandrasekhar voted early. Film personalities such as Mammootty, Mohanlal, Suraj Venjaramoodu and Asif Ali also cast ballots. In Thiruvananthapuram, first-time voters received halwa boxes and thank-you cards as part of outreach efforts.

BSF opens up Assam gates for families living beyond B'desh border fence to vote

Silchar: BSF personnel deployed vehicles and opened border gates early on Thursday to help at least 70 families living beyond the barbed-wire fence along the India-Bangladesh border in Assam's Sribhumi district reach polling stations and cast their votes, turning the exercise into a strong assertion of identity for residents of Karimganj South assembly constituency, **reports BB Goswami**. The voters are from five villages — Gabindapur, Uttar Lafasail, Tesua, Deutoli and Maishashan — that lie outside the fencing and are physically cut off from the Indian mainland.

"BSF opened the gates early and helped us reach the polling booths in their own vehicles. It was a huge convenience," said a local voter. After polling, BSF personnel dropped the villagers back home. "We are sincere about voting because it reassures us that we are Indians, and not just residents of a forgotten st-rip of land," the voter added.

DANCE of DEMOCRACY: PAGES 5 & 6

Sources said BSF had also facilitated electioneering in the run-up to polling by managing border gates and allowing candidates and their supporters to enter these remote settlements near the Zero Line.

₹550cr IDFC scam: CBI begins probe; Hry govt suspends 2 IAS officers

Chandigarh: CBI on Thursday formally took over investigation into Haryana's alleged Rs 550 crore financial fraud case related to IDFC First Bank and AU Small Finance Bank after registering an FIR a day earlier, **reports Ajay Sura**.

The central agency is likely to begin targeted searches at multiple locations.

Coinciding with this was the surprise suspension of two IAS officers and transfer/reshuffle of 15 senior bureaucrats. There was nothing officially to link the administrative action to the alleged scam but sections of officials tried to join the dots.

Sources in govt confirmed the actions, including suspension of IAS officers Ram Kumar Singh (2012 batch) and Pardeep Kumar (2011 batch), were taken by CM Nayab Singh Saini shortly before the case was to be formally handed over to CBI. The FIR has been registered by EO-III wing of CBI, Delhi, under provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and BNS. An intimation regarding the registration of the FIR was sent to the special CBI judge, Panchkula.

The case is related to fraudulent banking operations and fictitious transactions allegedly undertaken in a systematic manner to siphon off govt funds into accounts of shell entities, resulting in an estimated loss of Rs 550 crore. The case was initially examined by the state govt and referred to Haryana Vigilance and ACB registered an FIR, listing some officials of IDFC First Bank and AU Small Finance Banks as suspects. However, considering the magnitude and complexity of the case, the Haryana govt handed over the case to CBI.

Boy exposes mother, lover in uncle's murder

Mohammad.Dilshad@timesofindia.com

AI image

The case began to unravel when her 10-year-old son gave an account that differed from hers and told police that Jitendra had shot his maternal uncle with his mother's involvement

Agra: A 10-year-old boy exposed the alleged murder of his maternal uncle after his mother tried to pass it off as a missing person's case in Mainpuri, leading police to arrest the woman and her lover.

Karan Mishra, 25, had gone to drop his sister, Pooja Dube, 32, at her house in Kusmura village under Kishni police station area and stayed there for the night, where he allegedly caught her in a compromising situation with her lover, Jitendra Thakur, 38, before he was shot dead late Wednesday night, police said on Thursday.

Police said Pooja tried to cover up the crime by filing a missing person's complaint and telling family members that Karan had left the house during the night. The case began to unravel when her 10-year-old son gave an account that differed from hers and told police that Jitendra had shot his maternal uncle with his mother's involvement.

Mainpuri SP Ganesh Prasad Saha said, "On Wednesday, Pooja arrived at Kishni police station to report her brother missing. She was accompanied by her young son. During the conversation, the manner in which she presented the facts raised suspicion. Additionally, the child gave statements that differed from hers, which deepened the doubt and indicated that the brother might have been murdered."

Police and forensic teams then reached the spot and collected evidence. Saha said the body was found some distance from Pooja's in-laws' house and the child's statement helped investigators reconstruct the sequence of events. "The man came to drop his sister at her in-laws' house and stayed there. During the night, Jeetu arrived at the house and was talking to Pooja. Karan noticed this interaction, which led to an argument because he disapproved of the situation. Jeetu shot Karan dead. They disposed of the body in nearby bushes."

Police said a case was registered under relevant sections, including BNS section 103 (murder). Saha said the weapon used in the crime, blood-stained clothes and other evidence had been recovered. "It has also come to light that the victim was shot again to ensure his death. Both accused have been arrested and are being sent to court," Saha said. Karan's brother, Mohit Mishra, said there were seven siblings in the family, though one of their sisters had died earlier, leaving four sisters and two brothers. He said Karan had completed his BSc, had started preparing for police recruitment, and had also appeared in the recently held sub-inspector examination.

TIMES TRIBUTE — PAYING HOMAGE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL

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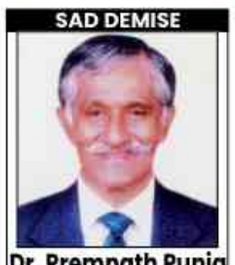


Dr. Premnath Punja

H/O (late) Vranda Punja & S/O (late) P.R. Thimmappa Punja (Glenmore Estate, Madikeri)

He passed away peacefully on April 9th, 2026.

Last rites to be performed at: Glenmore Estate, Madikeri, Coorg

He lived a full and purposeful life filled with meaning empathy and love. We will miss him dearly. He will always be in our hearts and souls.

Deeply mourned by Family

Fondly Remembered by Reeti, Viren, Rohini, and Riya Punja

IN MEMORIAM

Late Sri. Ramchand R. Belani

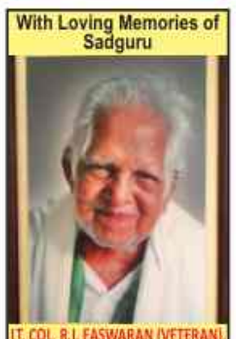
Late Smt. Godavari R. Belani

OUR GUIDING LIGHT AND INSPIRATION
YOU WILL LIVE FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS

Belani Family

DEATH ANNIVERSARY

With Loving Memories of Sadguru



LT. COL. R.I. EASWARAN (VETERAN), 104 ENGINEER REGIMENT

(25.07.1920 - 10.4.2012)

Sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam sarnam vraja aham tvam sarva- papebhyo moksayisyami ma sucah

Regular Satsang held in the memory of our "All pervading, All powerful and All knowing" SADGURU through virtual meetings co ordinated and conducted by Pravinji, Premchandranji, Ramadasanji and Chandrikaji

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REMEMBRANCES

1st Death Anniversary

In Loving Memory of Y P Gopal & Shashikala

Fondly Remembered & Deeply Missed

Y.P.G Family

REMEMBRANCES

1st Death Anniversary

In Loving Memory of Deepa Gopal

Fondly Remembered & Deeply Missed

Y.P.G Family

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26 Kenyans held at Mum airport with ₹38 crore gold

Ahmed.Ali
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has arrested 26 Kenyan nationals — mostly elderly women — for allegedly smuggling 29.4kg of gold worth Rs 37.7 crore from Nairobi, marking one of the largest seizures in recent times. The case comes amid a sharp decline in gold smuggling linked to disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict.

Acting on specific intelligence and digital profiling, DRI officials waited for the group on Wednesday at Terminal 2. Given heavy passenger traffic, officers chose to monitor the suspects near the arrival area of flight KQ 202 and planned to intercept them after they crossed the green channel. Around 11am, the passengers approached the green channel but noticing officials, moved away and gathered near baggage belts. All 25 denied carrying contraband. However, a search of two passengers led to the recovery of gold bars.

Too early to draw definitive lessons from W Asia: Navy

Army Flags Sindoor Playbook For Multi-Domain Wars

Vindhya.Pabolu
@timesofindia.com

Syed Asif and PTI

Gen Upendra Dwivedi and Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi (right)

Bengaluru: Even as the ongoing US-Israel and Iran conflict reshapes modern warfare, India's Navy is holding back from drawing firm conclusions, choosing instead to watch, analyse and adapt.

Speaking at Ran Samvad 2026 here Thursday, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi said it was "too early" to distil any definitive lesson from what he described as a still-evolving conflict.

"Right now, we are monitoring activities... We're monitoring like a hawk what's working, what's not working, what we can imbibe, and, more importantly, what's not to be done," Admiral Tripathi said.

"Disruptions near the Strait of Hormuz, apart from the severe economic consequences, have also led to a significant increase in dark vessels that operate on the seas — further highlighting the simultaneity of security, economic, and informational challenges within the maritime domain," he added.

The most striking takeaway, the Navy chief said, is the unprecedented transparency of the battlespace. "Anything that can be seen — moving or stationary — is vulnerable," he noted, stressing that land, sea, air and even space-based assets are now exposed in ways unseen before.

RAN SAMVAD 2026

Admiral Tripathi pointed to the sustained operations of US carrier strike groups, including the USS Abraham Lincoln, as evidence of enduring combat capability despite threats.

Chief of Army Staff Gen Upendra Dwivedi said lessons from Operation Sindoor, particularly the battle against disinformation, are now shaping how the Army prepares for future wars.

Nearly 15% of the effort during Op Sindoor went into managing information warfare, he said, adding: "The military population today is not just 12 lakh personnel, but nearly 1.3 crore, when you include veterans and families. All of them are part of the information space," he noted.

General Dwivedi described the current global environment as one of "dispersed, undeclared, multi-theatre conflict", where new actors — from state militaries to private players and even citizens — are constantly shaping outcomes.

Admiral Tripathi said aircraft carriers remain relevant despite drone threats, with their role shaped by operational context, as the Navy tracks US deployments. He noted that AI-driven systems are compressing decision cycles and shifting from "kill chains" to "kill webs".

Despite this, human judgment remains central amid risks of cognitive warfare. The Navy is building a networked, resilient force with uncrewed systems, precision-strike capabilities and indigenous combat management systems.

Exercises such as Navy-led Theatre Level Operational Exercise TROPEX and a tri-services exercise coordinated by the Navy last Nov reflect this shift, he said.

COMING UP

TOI presents a round-up of forthcoming key events and birthdays of notable personalities. Scan the QR code to post your wishes

April 10

Narayan Rane
Former Union minister and Maharashtra ex-CM
MeNarayanRane
menarayanrane

April 11
Iraq parliament to elect president

April 12

Sumitra Mahajan
Former Lok Sabha Speaker
S_MahajanLS

Prem Kumar Dhumal
Former Himachal Pradesh CM
DhumalHP
DhumalHP

Events
- Artemis II splashdown
- Nitish Kumar likely to take oath as Rajya Sabha MP

April 13

Najma Heptulla
Former Union minister and Manipur ex-guv
nheptulla
najmaheptulla

Oil roll out
NSE to introduce Dated Brent Crude Oil futures

Tribal women in MP lie on 'funeral pyres' to oppose river linking

P.Naveen@timesofindia.com

In viral images, women, many holding their small children, lay on the pyres as part of what they called 'chita andolan', demanding justice or death

Bhopal: Hundreds of tribal farmers, mostly women, lay on mock funeral pyres in MP's Chhatarpur district on Thursday during a protest against the proposed Ken-Betwa river linking project, signalling their resolve to oppose it till their last breaths.

In viral images, women, many holding their small children, lay on the pyres as part of what they called "chita andolan", demanding justice or death.

Tensions escalated after women protesters clashed with police during an attempt to disperse them, forcing the cops to step back.

The protesters, who alleged sustained harassment by the administration, vowed to dig in and carry on their fight till their demands are met.

The project, which aims to divert water from Ken river basin to the water-scarce areas of Betwa basin, involves construction of the Daudhan dam, a canal network of over 200 km, and related irrigation and power infrastructure.

Officials say the project is expected to meet the irrigation needs of over 10 lakh hectares of land and ensure drinking water to about 62 lakh people, apart from generating power. It targets drought-prone districts of MP and parts of UP, and is planned to be completed in phases over several years.

The villagers opposing the project say their concerns over land, forest rights and displacement have not been addressed, and assert that they will not back off till their demands remain unmet. The agitation is being led by tribal women along with Jai Kisan Sangathan leader Amit Bhatnagar, who said the women would carry out the funeral pyre protest on Friday, too.

The protesters alleged that they were earlier stopped from going to Delhi to push for their demands. Roads were blocked and supply of food and water to their settlements was affected, the protesters claimed, alleging that they were also being threatened.

The administration has imposed prohibitory orders under section 163 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in parts of Panna and Chhatarpur, restricting the movement of people near the protest sites.

Bareilly SSP: FIR filed, accounts frozen to keep money safe

▶ Continued from page 1

Sanjay Saxena, 55, a bakery owner, said the fraudsters also sent an "arrest warrant" on the phone. "My wife and I were so frightened that we had given all our bank details and talked about our valuables and properties. We were frozen with fear. It was my son who repeatedly asked me to disconnect the call," he said.

"When my parents hesitated, I told my father to at least put the phone on flight mode for a while so that he could get some sleep. I told them that flight mode doesn't disconnect a call. He agreed. And as soon as the call got cut, we informed the cops," said Tanmay.

ADG (Bareilly zone) Ramit Shamra told TOI, "The boy told us that he also keenly follows police campaigns against cyberfraud in newspapers." Bareilly SSP Anurag Arya said, "An FIR in the matter has been registered and all the accounts of the bakery owner have been frozen so that the money stays safe. We will arrest the accused soon."

TOI has been actively campaigning against "digital arrest" scams by raising awareness, educating the public, and covering the legal and technological aspects needed to be understood to combat this growing menace. The newspaper urges victims to report such scams to police, national cyber helpline at 1930 or via cybercrime.gov.in.

Cops ask HR named in IT firm plaint to explain role

Nashik: Nashik police served a notice to the HR officer of an IT company after she was named in one of the eight complaints registered by the women employees accusing their colleagues of sexual harassment and also of comments hurting religious sentiment. Nashik police commissioner Sandeep Karnik said the HR officer has been asked to explain her role.

A police team tracked the officer to Pune to serve the notice following allegations that she failed to act on internal red flags. Specifically, a complainant had emailed the HR officer regarding harassment by a team leader, only to be told to "stay cool" as such gestures were allegedly "common in MNC work culture."

So far, six employees have been arrested, including one facing rape charges. A ninth case was also filed by a male employee over religious sentiments. Given the severity of the exploitation within the 300-member firm, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) led by ACP Sandeep Mitke has been formed. Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis expressed shock at the scale of the abuse and praised the police's swift response. TNN

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL — Sandeep Adhwaryu

Stalin slams BJP women quota move; CWC meets today

New Delhi: Congress Working Committee (CWC) will meet on Friday to discuss the party's stance on BJP-led govt's proposed amendments to the women's reservation law, even as opposition DMK supremo **MK Stalin** launched a scathing criticism of the Centre's likely proposal.

The party has expressed concern over reported govt plan for a "proportionate increase" in Lok Sabha seats, alleging it will disadvantage southern states, as also smaller states, to the benefit of northern states. It argued that BJP has scheduled the session amid assembly elections to influence voting in Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

TN CM Stalin's criticism of the proposal has raised questions if INDIA bloc will support the bills being brought in Parliament. TNN

School cancels admission of four students over parents' 'unruly behaviour'

Nirupa.Vatyam
@timesofindia.com

A school letter dated April 8 attributed the move to a 'violation of the school's Parent Behaviour Policy and established rules

Hyderabad: An international school in Hyderabad with annual fees above Rs 1 lakh has been accused of ousting at least four students days into the new academic year after their parents protested alleged confinement of some pupils in a separate room over pending charges.

NIHOC The International School in Uppal area denied the allegations and claimed the admissions were cancelled over "unruly behaviour" of their parents. A school letter dated April 8 attributed the move to a "violation of the school's Parent Behaviour Policy and established rules". The parents contested this, alleging the terminations were in retaliation for questioning the school's discriminatory behaviour against students with pending fees.

Speaking to TOI, some parents claimed that some students were recently forced to sit separately throughout school hours because part of their fees was not cleared. This left them embarrassed, with many complaining of anxiety and breathing issues afterwards, they added.

"When we confronted the management over this discriminatory practice, they handed us admission termination letters citing violation of a school policy that many of us are not even aware of. My son had a panic attack after he was segregated from his class," said an aggrieved parent. According to this parent, this happened despite paying Rs 1 lakh as fee. "I only had to pay another Rs 37,000 which I had kept pending as I had sought concession under the sports quota and was waiting for the school's reply on the matter," the parent alleged.

While one parent claimed the school had cancelled the admission of at least 10 students, the management maintained that only four were removed.

Man beheads driver in Bihar mkt; locals lynch him

Araria: A "sattu" seller allegedly beheaded a pickup driver and placed the head on the road at the busy Marketing Yard Chowk in Forbesganj town of Bihar's Araria district on Thursday, inviting the ire of a mob which fatally assaulted him. Panic-stricken traders downed their shutters even as heavy police force was deployed in the area, **reports L P Nayak**. Rabi Chauhan, the "sattu" seller, and pickup driver Nabi Hussain alias Ali Hussain quarrelled over space in the market — Chauhan for placing his wooden cart and Hussain for parking his vehicle at the same location.

The altercation soon turned violent as Chauhan pulled out a knife and inflicted multiple injuries on Hussain before beheading him in full public view. He walked carrying the severed head before placing it on the ground and attempting to flee. Locals chased and overpowered Chauhan, beating him mortally before police could intervene.

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in
(Dy. CE/Hydel Project PSPCL, Patiala Contact Number 9646118754)
Tender Enquiry No. 354/HPs/ED-II/ASHP-161 Dated: 06.04.2026
Dy. CE/ Hydel Projects, PSPCL, Shed A-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala Invites E-Tender for Design, supply, Erection, testing and commissioning of 1 no 200 KVA Silent DG (CPCB IV+ norms compatible) set complete in all respect for Power House no. 1 Ganguwal of ASHP, Anandpur Sahib.
For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 13.04.2026 onwards.
NOTE: Corrigendum and Addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in
C 470/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2026-27/10302

स्वच्छता जल एवं सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य परियोजना — SANITATION WATER AND COMMUNITY HEALTH PROJECT
E-TENDER NOTICE :- 01/2026-27
URN :- SWP2627WSRC00001, SWP2627WSRC00002, SWP2627WSRC00003, SWP2627WSRC00004

S.No	Name of work	Total cost (in Lacs.)	EMD (in Lacs.)	BID NO.
1.	खातक जलग्रण छायावास गोमुण्डा रायपुर	260.66	5.21	01/2026-27_01
2.	खातक जलग्रण छायावास बर्योरा, कुशलगढ़	260.66	5.21	01/2026-27_02
3	खातक जलग्रण छायावास सचवाली घाटोल जिला बांसवाड़ा	260.66	5.21	01/2026-27_03
4	खातक जलग्रण छायावास खातक जिला बांसवाड़ा	260.66	5.21	01/2026-27_04

DIRECTOR
SWACH PROJECT UDAIPUR

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate identity Number : U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in Mobile No. 96461-55525
E-Tender Enq. No. 724 /P-3/EMPW-13288 dated 07.04.2026
Dy.Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2026_POWER_165395_1 for DNIT for sale of 1,00,000 MT (METRIC TONNE) DRY FLY ASH from GGSSTP/ RUPNAGAR TO bulk consumers engaged in manufacturing cement, ready mix concrete/ash based product etc. as per MOEF&CC guidelines. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from dated 09.04.2026 / 12:00 Noon onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in
RTP-38/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2026-27/10308

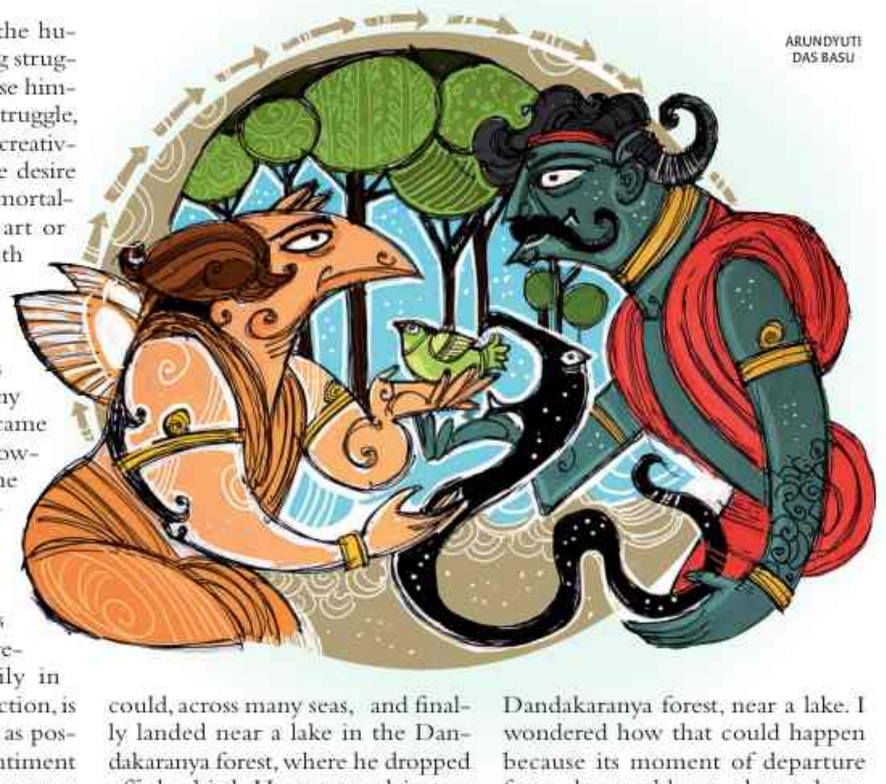
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS
(DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL & TRAINING)
Applications are invited for the post of Central Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission.
The details of eligibility, other requirements and the proforma for sending particulars for consideration for the post may be downloaded from the Department of Personnel and Training website: https://dopt.gov.in.
The last date of receipt of applications in the Department is **18th May, 2026.**
CBC 32101/11/0001/2627

Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI)
B-500, Tower-B, 5th Floor, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi-110029
Telephone: 011-49431800 | Website: janaushadhi.gov.in
Extension of Last Date for Submission of Application for CEO (PMBI) POST
In continuation of earlier notification for inviting applications to fill up the post of **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** in the **Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI),** a Society under the aegis of Department of Pharmaceuticals, Government of India in Level-13 in the pay matrix (₹1,23,100 - 2,15,900), the last date of submission of application is hereby extended upto **25.04.2026**.
Further details, including the terms and conditions of deputation and application procedure, are available on the website **https://janaushadhi.gov.in/**
Interested individuals, who are eligible, may apply through proper channel, as per the application procedure, to **General Manager (F&A), Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India, B-500, Tower-B, 5th Floor, World Trade Center, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi - 110029** and also send the same through email at **recruitment@janaushadhi.gov.in**
General Manager (F&A)

THE SPEAKING TREE

Yam Thinks Of Immortality

A flower blooms and wilts, yet its fragrance lingers in the earth's memory. In the same way, every life must one day come to an end, but the sentiments it leaves behind continue to perfume hearts of those who remain, writes SUDHAMAHI REGUNATHAN



ARUNDYUTI DAS BASU

Yam thought of the human being's long struggle to immortalise himself. It is a good struggle, he reflected. Great works of creativity have emerged out of the desire among human beings to immortalise themselves. A work of art or literature may disappear with time or by accident or even wanton destruction, but the beauty that it inspires will remain forever – that is the immortal element in any creation. A simple thought came into Yam's mind: look at a flower, it blooms and wilts. But the beauty it radiates, its fragrance, its colours, remain in the memory of the earth. The feeling of being bereft of beauty is death. *Brahmn is Satyam Shivam Sundaram*, reflected Yam ... living daily in beauty, be it in thought or action, is to come as close to *Brahmn* as possible. Like the beautiful sentiment that arose in Garud when he saw a little bird, which was also beautiful.

Once, all gods were travelling to Mount Kailash to meet Shiv. So was Yam. Upon reaching there Yam saw Garud at the gate and understood that Garud had just dropped off his master there. He smiled at Garud. He also saw a beautiful little bird perched on the branch of a tree by the gate. Yam went in.

Meanwhile Garud, who had been following every movement of Yam's with a view to understanding what this most feared king would do next, caught him looking at the bird. 'Oh! Yam looked at the bird, that means the bird's days are numbered. Such a beautiful bird, i must save the bird,' thought Garud, and flew into an obsessive panic. He quickly took the bird and flew as far away as he could, across many seas, and finally landed near a lake in the Dandakaranya forest, where he dropped off the bird. He returned just as gods were leaving after meeting Shiv. Luckily, Yam came out before Vishnu did, and so Garud had the opportunity to watch him and his reaction when he saw the bird was gone. With a smug expression on his face, Garud caught Yam looking in the direction of the branch where the bird had been sitting. "Sire," said Garud respectfully, with a little curiosity and a small sense of accomplishment, "are you looking for the bird you saw here before you went in? Why had you noted it before going in?"

"Oh that?" smiled Yam, and Garud felt that maybe he was not so fearsome after all. Yam continued, "When i chanced to see that lovely bird, i saw that it was going to be swallowed by a python in the Dandakaranya forest, near a lake. I wondered how that could happen because its moment of departure from the world was almost here. And the bird was so small. How could its wings take it to the Dandakaranya forest which is so far away?" There was a moment's silence. Garud felt his vision was getting hazy. He had been so foolish. He, not Yam, had taken the bird to its death. Yam was speaking again, softly. "But something must have happened ..." he mused as he drove away on Mahisha.

Yam hoped Garud now understood that he, Yam, was just doing his duty as one who transported those souls whose life on earth had been completed to their resting place before they returned to earth again. This *samsar* is a cycle. But the incident remained in his memory because of the beauty of the bird, because of the beauty of Garud's sentiment towards it. ■

(Excerpted from 'The Immortal King, Yama')

SACRED STORIES

'Yes SIR', 'No SIR': How voter roll revision is driving Bengal's poll

Over 90 lakh names have been removed from the voters' list. As TMC and BJP go hammer and tongs at each other over the deletions, all other issues have taken a backseat

Tamaghna Banerjee, Dipawali Mitra & Kaushik Pradhan | TNN

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has emerged as the most dominant and contentious issue in the 2026 Bengal assembly polls, eclipsing traditional campaign themes such as welfare politics, industrial stagnation, corruption, and identity.

SIR in the state began on Nov 4, 2025. A month-and-a-half later, a draft roll on Dec 16 listed about 7 crore voters after excluding 58.2 lakh names that were marked as ASDD (absent, shifted, dead, or duplicate). This figure subsequently rose to 63 lakh, but deletions in Bengal remained significantly lower than that in states like UP, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat.

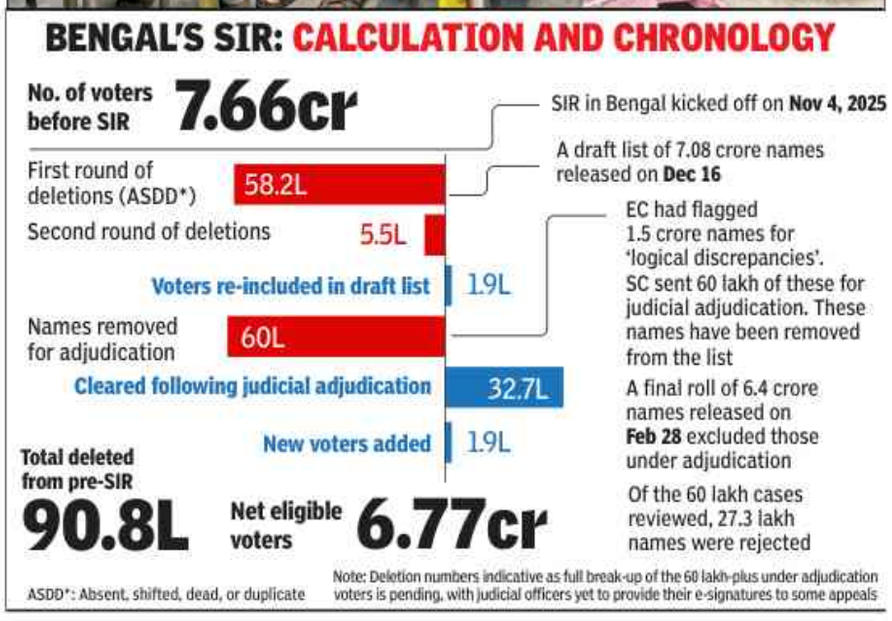
However, the roll revision suddenly entered an anxious and uncertain phase when 1.5 crore of Bengal's 7 crore voters (after initial enumeration) were flagged for "logical discrepancies". Voters were checked against a highly contentious five-point list even if they were mapped in the SIR rolls for 2002 — the base year for the current revision, with Election Commission (EC) saying that its new AI algorithm had identified five types of discrepancies: spelling differences between names in the 2002 and 2025 rolls; cases where more than six voters linked themselves to a single ancestor; age gaps between a voter and their parent falling outside the 15-to-45-year range; cases where the difference between a grandparent's age and that of the voter was less than 40 years; and instances where the voter's gender did not align with the name provided.

This saw more than 60 lakh voters placed in the "Under Adjudication" category and excluded from voting, pending verification. Later, Supreme Court handed 60 lakh of these 1.5 crore cases to judicial officers to act as referees after state election officers and micro-observers disagreed. These judicial officers struck down 27 lakh names at a time when no window remained for appeal.

PTI

Voters wait for an SIR hearing at a centre in Kolkata last Dec

BENGAL'S SIR: CALCULATION AND CHRONOLOGY


No. of voters before SIR
7.66cr
SIR in Bengal kicked off on Nov 4, 2025
A draft list of 7.08 crore names released on Dec 16
First round of deletions (ASDD*)
58.2L
Second round of deletions
5.5L
Voters re-included in draft list
1.9L
EC had flagged 1.5 crore names for 'logical discrepancies'. SC sent 60 lakh of these for judicial adjudication. These names have been removed from the list
Names removed for adjudication
60L
Cleared following judicial adjudication
32.7L
A final roll of 6.4 crore names released on Feb 28 excluded those under adjudication
New voters added
1.9L
Total deleted from pre-SIR
90.8L
Net eligible voters
6.77cr
Of the 60 lakh cases reviewed, 27.3 lakh names were rejected
ASDD*: Absent, shifted, dead, or duplicate
Note: Deletion numbers indicative as full break-up of the 60 lakh-plus under adjudication voters is pending, with judicial officers yet to provide their e-signatures to some appeals

TMC On Warpath

Trinamool Congress (TMC) had questioned the timing and scale of the exercise. "We pointed out that the last intensive revision in 2002 took nearly two years. How could this be completed in barely two months without errors? Many valid voters and well-known names have been omitted in the list prepared by EC, which is working under the instructions of BJP," said party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh.

BJP strongly backed the process, calling it a necessary correction. "This process is about cleaning up the voter list — identifying illegal entries and removing bogus voters. TMC is objecting because it has long allowed infiltration and turned such individuals into their main voter base," said Bengal BJP chief Samik Bhattacharya. Suvendu Adhikari, Leader of Opposition in the assembly, told 'The News Minute' media outlet that after SIR, "the contest is over", claiming there was rampant bogus voting previously in the state.

An analysis by Sabar Institute of Bhowanipore assembly seat — where sitting MLA and CM Mamata Banerjee faces Adhikari — showed that nearly 52% of voters flagged for logical discrepancies were Muslim, despite Census 2011 placing the Muslim population at 20% of the constituency. The study noted that while Muslims accounted for 22.7% of ASDD deletions (broadly matching the population), this changed sharply in the logical discrepancies list. The final roll suggested that nearly 56.7% of voters flagged under the 'Under Adjudication' category were Muslim — nearly three times their share in the state's population.

Issue To Beat All Issues

The SIR row, said political analyst Udayan Banerjee, was expected. "This was inevitable as the SIR exercise was started late and rules were constantly changed. Voting rights are a massive issue for the poor because an EPIC card determines access to govt assistance. Now, issues like RG Kar and recruitment scams have taken a back seat and the deprivation of voting rights is the main issue."

Sabir Ahamed, researcher at Sabar Institute, said that "while polls should be based on the performance of representatives, the focus has shifted to voter anxiety and the struggle to retain voting rights". "From the perspective of democracy, the true purpose of an election is defeated when people must spend three months proving citizenship through heavy documentation."

Stalin rides Dravidian model 2.0, EPS looks to trip him on law & order

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@timesofindia.com

Pics: ANI, IANS

RALLYING FORCES: TN chief minister M K Stalin has made the state-vs-Centre battle his poll plank; EPS (left), who has suffered a string of defeats since 2021, will find it difficult to keep ADMK together after another loss

For five years, M K Stalin has been walking down his father M Karunanidhi's path. Now, the Tamil Nadu CM and DMK president is trying to achieve something his father couldn't: a second consecutive term. He calls it the Dravidian Model 2.0.

In the 234-member assembly, DMK heads a broad alliance that includes Congress, VCK, MDMK, MMK, and the Left. Stalin's Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) now has 21 parties, including actor Vijayakant-founded DMDK, while reducing seat share for long-time partners. The ADMK-led NDA includes PMK, AMMK and Tamil Maanila Congress. Actor C Joseph Vijay is making his poll debut with his TVK, widely seen as a disruptor, while Tamil nationalist Seeman's NTK occupies the fourth corner.

DMK seeks to make this a Centre vs state battle: projecting the Union govt as the villain, which tries to rob the state of its rights and language, and Stalin as the prime protector. "Our Dravidian Model, a superfast engine, will never bow its head before BJP's *dabba* (rickety) engine (punning on BJP's 'double engine' slogan). Which team will emerge victorious — Team Tamil Nadu or Team Delhi? Shall we settle this once and for all?" Stalin says.

He also presents a bouquet of his govt's welfare measures: free bus travel and monthly monetary assistance to 1.2 crore women, free breakfast for schoolkids, and development — double-digit growth — while promising to double down on both the fronts. Supporting Stalin with vigorous campaigns are his son and deputy CM Udhayanidhi, and sister and MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi.

DMK calls the opposition "BJP and its bonded allies", who "wouldn't hesitate to change the name of Tamil Nadu to Dakshin Pradesh".

The DMK offensive is also an attempt to nullify the anti-incumbency sentiment, mostly driven by a perception of rising crime and narcotics. Several DMK leaders, including ministers, face corruption charges and are named by ED and other agencies. ADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) loses no opportunity to blame Stalin for the "deteriorating law and order" and the "Rs 10-lakh-crore debt" his govt has got the state into.

EPS has more at stake. He has had a string of defeats: the 2021 assembly elections and local body polls, and the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Being out for another term would make it difficult for him to hold ADMK together.

Two years after the ADMK-BJP alliance lost the 2021 assembly polls, they parted ways in Sept 2023, bitterly. Union home minister Amit Shah revived the alliance in April 2025, but the friction shows. While PM Narendra Modi refers to the next govt in TN as an "NDA govt", EPS calls it an "ADMK govt". On the DMK side, too, a section of Congress netas has been demanding a coalition govt, which TN has never had.

Both the main fronts are working on caste equations. Broadly, Thevars dominate the southern region and Gounders the west, while Vanniyars and Dalits have a big say in the northern districts. With T T V Dhinakaran's AMMK back in the NDA fold, EPS is breathing a little easier on the Thevar front. The presence of Anbumani Ramadoss's PMK ensures a chunk of the Vanniyar votes, too. Two expelled ADMK leaders — former Jayalalithaa aide V K Sasikala, who has floated a party, and former CM O Panneerselvam, who has joined DMK — may play spoilsport for NDA in some Thevar pockets.

With most Muslim groups by its side, DMK is sitting pretty on minorities, who constitute more than 10% of the voters. While Vijay threatens to eat into the Christian vote bank, Stalin has upped the ante against the FCRA (Amendment) bill.

The state never had a disruptor like Vijay. The actor remains a big crowd-puller. Surveys show TVK may get 15%-20% votes, but their conversion into seats may be minimal. Stalin has avoided naming Vijay, who has branded the contest as 'DMK vs TVK'.

No-freebie champion whose vote share jumped 6x

Julie.Mariappan@timesofindia.com

As Tamil Nadu's main contenders — the DMK, ADMK and actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam — compete to outbid one another with poll promises, from refrigerators to Rs 8,000 appliance coupons for women and six free LPG cylinders a year, one player in the field has chosen a different script. Seeman, chief coordinator of Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK), dismisses freebies as "an insult" to people's dignity, casting himself as the moral dissenter in an election shaped by welfare one-upmanship.

It is a familiar role for the 59-year-old. An outsider with no political friends in Dravidian land, Seeman contests independently, insisting that alliances would dilute both his politics and his purpose. His core proposition is blunt, but central to his appeal: "Everyone has the right to live in Tamil Nadu. However, the right to rule belongs exclusively to us, the Tamils."

That message has helped Seeman carve out a distinct, if still electorally unfulfilled, place in Tamil Nadu politics. Since making his electoral debut in the 2016 assembly election, he has not won a seat in either the assembly or Parliament. Yet, NTK's vote base has grown steadily. In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, the party contested all 40 seats in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on its own and secured about 8% of the vote — up from 3.8% in 2019. Last year, the Election Commission granted NTK "recognised party" status.

Seeman has continued to reject alliances on principle. Campaigning in Coimbatore, he said that if parties with 1, 2 or 3% vote share could bargain for 20 or 30 seats — or even cash — then his own leverage would have been far greater had he been willing to negotiate. But, he says, he is not in politics for money. "I stand for my people," he says. This time too, NTK has fielded candidates in all 234 assembly constituencies.

Born in 1966 in Aranaiyur, Sivaganga district, Seeman first made his name in Tamil cinema as a director and later as an actor before moving into politics full-time. He directed films, including 'Panchalankurichi' in 1996, starring Tamil actor Prabhu. Over time, however, cinema gave way to activism as he became increasingly vocal on issues of Tamil identity, language, farmers' rights, environmental protection and the plight of Sri Lankan Tamils.

His support for the Sri Lankan Tamils would come to define both his politics and his public persona. In 2008, as the Sri Lankan civil war neared its end, Seeman met LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, a figure he continues to openly venerate. The following years cemented his image as a fiery Tamil nationalist. He spoke out strongly against the killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka and was detained under the National Security Act in 2009 and 2010 over speeches in support of Prabhakaran. When he founded NTK on May 18, 2010 — the first death anniversary of the LTTE chief — the symbolism was unmistakable.

© Suresh Kumar

RIDING SOLO: NTK chief Seeman campaigns in Chennai on April 7. He has positioned his party as a Tamil nationalist alternative to DMK and ADMK

Seeman has positioned NTK as a Tamil nationalist alternative to the two dominant Dravidian parties, the DMK and ADMK. But his journey has hardly been linear. Once a staunch supporter of Dravidian icon Periyar E V Ramasamy, he now rejects the very description of Tamil Nadu as "Periyar land". A critic of the DMK and Congress over the Sri Lankan Tamil issue, he backed Jayalalithaa's ADMK in the 2011 and 2014 elections before entering the fray as an Independent in 2016.

The first outing was disappointing. NTK fielded candidates in all 234 assembly constituencies and lost deposits in nearly every seat. Seeman himself finished fifth in Cuddalore. But the setbacks did not stop the party's slow climb. Its vote share rose to 6.6% in the 2021 assembly election, up from 1.1% in 2016. Seeman has continued to present that incremental growth as proof that his politics is taking root even without the backing of larger formations.

Part of that appeal lies in the man's style as much as his message. Seeman is a mesmerising Tamil orator, one whose speeches often draw crowds willing to stand through rain and long hours just to hear him. At a recent meeting in Ariyalur, hundreds did exactly that. "A leader must speak with purpose, not merely from paper. He should speak from his heart," the NTK chief says, in a dig at his rivals who rely on text and teleprompters.

In his speeches, Seeman attacks corruption, vote-buying, and what he calls "dependency-creating freebies". He promises quality education, basic infrastructure, govt jobs, state-supported dairy farms and prohibition. He has also made women's representation a key part of NTK's pitch, giving women half the seats in the party and promising equal representation in govt, which he describes as their birthright.

To supporters, this is what explains his hold over a growing slice of younger voters. "People become his fans for his speeches. He built the party by articulating his principles and ideologies," says Idumbavanam Karthik, NTK youth wing coordinator.

However, Seeman's politics is also marked by contradiction and controversy. He has made inflammatory remarks against Christians and Muslims. At his meetings, he declares that Tamils are followers of 'Saivam' and 'Vaishnavam', not 'Hindus'. Yet, at an RSS event, he said he would use Brahmins to break the Dravidian fort. In line with that overture, he has fielded six Brahmin candidates this time.

That may be the paradox at the heart of Seeman's politics. But in a state where politics has long been dominated by two large Dravidian heavyweights, Seeman has made sure he cannot simply be brushed aside as a fringe player.

Why Mamata wants to 'practise law again'

At times, I feel like starting law practice again," Bengal CM **Mamata Banerjee** said on Wednesday as she kept up her attack against BJP and EC over large-scale deletion of names from voter rolls following SIR in the state. Banerjee, who has an LLB and became the first CM to argue a case in Supreme Court when she appeared before it against SIR, said her party TMC would move court over the EC exercise.

POLL POURRI

"You will not be able to defeat TMC by deleting names. We will move court again to resist the exclusion of names," the TMC chief said during campaigning. "We will fight legally to get the names included. If people cannot vote, what is the need to set up the tribunals? I am unable to digest this. At times, I feel like going back and start practising law. But I am unable to do that because I am in the chair of the CM."

On Bengal's campaign trail, candidates taste real life... for reel

Zeeshan Jawed & Tamaghna Banerjee | TNN

As Bengal gears up to vote later this month, many candidates — from either side of the political spectrum — have seemed to realise that the surest route to voters' hearts may lie through blurring the line between the political and the performative: a bit of kitchen prep, lending a hand to haul buckets of water and gas cylinders, giving free medical check-ups and even, in one case, providing a potential voter a quick shave in a local salon.

If some thought it was a bit over the top, the message was simple enough: we are one of you, a part of your everyday lives.

At least before the polls. And as long as real life can turn into 'reel' life.

The performance does not end on the campaign trail. It travels — edited, looped and amplified — into Facebook feeds, WhatsApp forwards, YouTube shorts and Instagram reels, where relatability is currency and 'going viral' is strategy.

In a bustling market in Hooghly's Arambag, Trinamool candidate Mita Bag did not stop at handshakes. She walked into a roadside stall selling fritters, dipped slices of potato and brinjal into batter and dropped them into sizzling oil, made sure they browned properly and even sold a few, wrapping them in *thongas* (paper bags).

She was well aware of the potential for sarcasm. "People may ridicule me," she said, "but that's the best way to connect with locals."

About 150km away in Birbhum's Dubrajpur, BJP MLA Anup Saha squatted beside a roadside barber, picked up the razor and began shaving the beard of the lone customer occupying the chair. The video clip spread rapidly online. "These are all part of outreach campaign," Saha said, "my attempt to show I am part of them."

In Durgapur West, BJP candidate Lakshman Ghorui found his moment in a queue for water. Campaigning in Benachiti, he spotted women waiting to fetch water and stepped in to help. "I saw women standing in a queue, and offered to carry the buckets to show the current state of Bengal and send a message — if BJP comes, there will be no water scarcity," said Ghorui.

In Hooghly's Pursurah, Trinamool's Partha Hazari turned a household crisis into political theatre. Walking into a voter's home, he learnt that the family had run out of LPG, and began making rotis on a clay oven. "I saw Mashi struggling, as she had run out of LPG, so I prepared rotis for her," said Hazari. Witnesses said he rolled nine.

In Sainthia, BJP candidate Krishnakanta Saha chose brawn power to get close to voters. During his campaign, he was seen carrying LPG cylinders on his shoulders, delivering them door-to-door. "We wanted to show that there is no LPG shortage, and the 'crisis' is propaganda spread by TMC to malign the Centre," he said.

In Hooghly's Goghat, Trinamool candidate Nirmal Maji — a doctor — has almost been running OPDs along his campaign route. With a stethoscope around his neck, Maji pauses to examine voters. "This is my responsibility as a doctor," he said.

Roughly 140km away in Birbhum's Nanoor, BJP candidate Khokon Das was spotted cutting hay, preparing cattle feed and chopping bamboo to help villagers build shelters. "I am a villager," he said. "I have no shame in doing village work."

Even in Kolkata's urban constituencies, the performative instinct persists. Trinamool's Kunal Ghosh in Beleghata, BJP's Vijay Ojha in Jorasanko and Sajal Ghosh in Baranagar were spotted wielding cricket bats. "Who doesn't like to smash a few balls out of the park?" Ojha quipped.

The template of blurring the lines is not without precedent. CM Banerjee has famously dropped into roadside stalls to brew tea, dance with members of tribal communities, pluck tea leaves, craft momo and even kick a football. "These things come to her instinctively," said a senior TMC neta. "And many are now following her."

Observers, however, felt that what is different this time around is the grammar. Campaigning is no longer confined to podiums, posters or processions; it is engineered for the screen. Every gesture is a potential clip, every interaction a meme. "Candidates are putting extra effort to be seen doing something," said political scientist Arunabha Dutta.

A digital media publicist, working on a Kolkata campaign, said that more than speeches, acts like frying fritters, reading X-rays, lugging water buckets and helping out in the kitchen, travel the furthest online. "Candidates performing daily chores become instant reel material," he said.

But are voters lapping it up, or taking things like kitchen theatrics with a pinch of salt? Some, like Salt Lake resident Shreya Ghosh, were somewhere down the middle. Ghosh said she recognises the "choreography", but was watching it for fun anyway — as candidates compete not just for votes, but for "moments".

Inputs from Falguni Banerjee in Hooghly

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT: Candidates across the political spectrum have been making sure they are seen engaging with voters — whether it's by giving a quick shave, rolling rotis, playing cricket, or even offering a free health consultation

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Dr. MANMOHAN SINGH BENGALURU CITY UNIVERSITY

Office of the Registrar (Admin), Jnana Jyothi Central College Campus,
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru – 560001. Ph. No. 080-22961016/22131385
E-Mail ID: registrar@bcu.ac.in / registrarbcu@gmail.com

No: Dr.MSBCU/ACA/UG Admissions/2026-27 Date: 09.04.2026

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION

Admission to Undergraduate Courses at Dr. Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University – "Jnanajyothi Central College Campus", University College for Women (Malleshwaram), PG Centre (Bagalur), Bengaluru and affiliated colleges for the Academic Year 2026–27 is hereby notified. Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission to following Undergraduate (UG) courses offered at the University Campus and its constituent college and PG center.

1. Courses Offered at "Jnanajyothi – Central College Campus"

Sl. No.	Course	Discipline
1	BCA	Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning
2	BCA	Data Science
3	B.Com	Accounting & Finance
4	B.Com	Financial Technology
5	BBA	Business Analytics
6	B.Sc	Computer Science, Mathematics, Statistics
7	B.Sc	Fashion & Apparel Design
8	BA	Economics, History, Journalism, Social Work, Journalism, French, English, Journalism, French
Languages Offered: Kannada, English, Hindi, French, German		

2. Courses Offered at University College for Women, 13th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru

Sl.No.	Course	Discipline
1	BCA	Computer Applications
2	BCA	Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
3	B.Com	General
4	B.Com	Accounting and Finance
5	BA	Economics, History, Journalism
Languages Offered : Kannada, English, French, German, Sanskrit, Hindi		

3. Courses offered at PG Center, Bagalur, Bengaluru.

Sl.No.	Course	Discipline
1	BCA	Computer Applications
2	BCA	Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
3	B.Com	General
4	B.Com	Accounting and Finance
Languages Offered: Kannada, English, Hindi		

4. Admissions in Affiliated colleges

Admissions to undergraduate (UG) degree courses is also commenced in 219 Affiliated colleges and 11 Autonomous colleges located across 13 Legislative Assembly constituencies : **Shanthinagar, Byatarayanapura, Yelahanka, Malleshwaram, Hebbal, Shivajinagar, Gandhinagar, Chamarajpet, Chickpet, Basavanagudi, BTM Layout, Jayanagar, and Rajajinagar.**

For more details, candidates are advised to visit the university websites : **www.bcu.ac.in / www.bcu.karnataka.gov.in**

Application & Admission Details :

- The eligibility for admission is 10+2 or any other equivalent qualification.
- Candidates are informed to visit the University websites **www.bcu.ac.in / www.bcu.karnataka.gov.in** for further information.
- For online registration, candidates are informed to visit the Government of Karnataka official website **https://uucms.karnataka.gov.in**
- Candidates are advised to regularly check the above websites.

Note: If the required number of applications is not received for any course, the University reserves the right not to offer admissions for that course.

Sd/-
Registrar

DIPR/CP/SHIRDI SAI/134/2026-27

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
Karnataka Maritime Board
Office of the Chief Executive Officer, Karnataka Maritime Board
Khanija Bhavan, No. 49, West Entrance, 3rd Floor, Racecourse Road, Bengaluru - 560001.
Telephone No. 080-29577444 E-mail: ceokmb2019@gmail.com

NOTIFICATION

Sub:Engaging Director Ports and Member (Maritime and IWT operations) on Contractual basis at Karnataka Maritime Board-Reg.

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for engaging Director Ports and Member (Maritime and IWT operations) at Karnataka Maritime Board on contractual basis for an initial period of one (1) year extendable based on annual performance for a maximum period of two (2) years.

Sl. No	Designation	No of Posts	Pay Scale	Qualification
1	Director Ports and Member (Maritime and IWT operations)	01	Rs. 1,75,000 -2,00,000 (consolidated per month)	1) Must be holder of a Certificate of Competency issued under the Merchant shipping Act, 1958 having validity throughout the Commonwealth as Master in Foreign Going ship; 2) Must have served as Master of a ship 3) Must have experience in Port Administration for not less than ten years in Group-A post equivalent to the port officer of Inland Water Transport under any of the Maritime States in India or the Government of India. 4) Must have the following visual standard with or without glasses namely: Right eye: V: 6/6; Left eye: V: 6/6 Distant Vision / Near Vision: 0.6 Each eye must have a full field of vision, squint or any morbid condition of the eye or of the eye lids (Trachoma like) of either eye shall be deemed to be a disqualification; and 5) Must not have attained the age of forty-five years.

Candidates who are eligible for the above post are informed to send their applications to kmb.recruitments@gmail.com **on or before 27.04.2026,** enclosing the scanned copies of Bio data and certificates with passport size colored photograph affixed to the certificate duly attested by the Gazette Officer as per the Proforma given overleaf in the ANNEXURE IN DUPLICATE.

Candidates should bring all the original documents pertaining to their qualification, degree certificates, date of birth, experience and awards if any, etc., produce before the interview committee at the time of Interview. The selection is based on the interview, relevant qualification, experience and roster points as provided by Government of Karnataka (GoK).

No TA and DA will be paid to the candidates appearing for the interview. The appointment is purely on contractual basis for an initial period of one (1) year extendable based on annual performance review for a maximum period of two (2) years and also, appointment under this Notification will not confer any rights on the part of the candidates for any appointment in the Karnataka Maritime Board.

Sd/-, Chief Executive Officer
Karnataka Maritime Board

DIPR/KWR/KSMCA/21/26-27 dt.08.04.2026

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Scan QR for Online Registration

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Time/ समय:	6PM TO 9PM
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e-mail : mdkrdcl@gmail.com Website: http://www.krdcl.in

No: KRDCL/IFB/Company Secretary/2026-27/141 Date: 08-04-2026

Notification for the Service of Company Secretary

Karnataka Road Development Corporation Ltd is a Govt of Karnataka Undertaking, here by issues this notification **for the service of Company Secretary,** on contract basis, in accordance with the provisions of the Company Act-2013 and with the approval of the Competent Authority. The Company is looking for high profile, dynamic, result oriented and innovative candidate for the post of Company Secretary. The details are as follows:

Post	Company Secretary (on Contract basis)
No. of Post	One
Duration of Service	Three Years.
Place of Work	Head Office, Bengaluru
Maximum Age	60 Years
Qualification	Degree with ACS Certificate, Membership of Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), preferably Law Graduate.
Language	Writing & Reading in Kannada & English is Mandatory.
Experience	Minimum 3 to 5 Years in the relevant field and preferably work with Govt. Departments/ Board/Corporation/PSU's
Consolidate Monthly Pay	Rs.1,25,000/-
Last date for submission of application with details	Submit the application along with experience details, Qualifications, Certificates, ID & Address Proof & ICSI Membership Certificate copies **on or before 15-05-2026,** during office hours by physical or mail.
Postal Adderss & Contact No.	Managing Director, No.08, "Samparka Soudha", 3rd Floor, Dr.Rajkumar Road, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru-560 010 080-22024000.
e-mail	mdkrdcl@gmail.com

Sd/- Managing Director
KRDCL, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/YC/115/2026-27

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(An Institute of the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council, Govt. of India)
NCR Biotech Science Cluster, 3rd Milestone, Faridabad – Gurugram Expressway,
P.O. Box No. 04, Faridabad – 121001

Extension for Recruitment Notice No. THS/RN/41/2025

The last date for submission of application for the positions of Consultant & Head Pharmacology and Consultant (Study Coordinator) has been extended till 20th April 2026.

For more details, please visit our website: www.thsti.res.in

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE : EM/PD-09/2025

Name of the work : "Providing Assistance in Office-cum-Site works under E&M Department on job work basis for a period of one year".
Estimated Cost : ₹ 1,25,99,364/- excluding GST.
Last Date & Time of submission : 17/04/2026 at 18:00 Hrs.
Refer our website for details : https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.

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PPA/PR/05/2026-2027, dt.09/04/2026

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2. **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR :** Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology, Forensic Medicine, Community Medicine, Gen. Medicine, Psychiatry, Gen. Surgery, Opthalmology, Radiodiagnosis, OBGY.
3. **ASSISTANT PROFESSOR :** Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology, Forensic Medicine, Biochemistry.
4. **SR :** Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry, Pharmacology, Forensic Medicine, Community Medicine, Gen. Medicine, Radiodiagnosis, Orthopedics.

Kothiya Hospital, B/h.Torrent Power Station, Uttamnagar, Nikolgam Road, Ahmedabad-382350.
Website:www.kothiyahospital.com

Email Your CV : admin@kothiyahospital.com Prescribed format only (Available on website) if any Query 90811 11578

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Advt No.2025/Admin/1339/CERS-2

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For details visit:
www.newmangaloreport.gov.in/vacancy

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Secretary

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Date : 10.04.2026
Place : Kolkata

The Asst. General Manager (P&E)
SBI LHO Kolkata

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited
(A Joint Venture of GoI & GoK)
3rd Floor, BMTC Complex, K.H.Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-27
e-Mail: helpdesk@bmrc.co.in **Website:** www.bmrc.co.in
No. BMRCL/HR/0001/PRJ/2026 Dated: 08.04.2026

NOTIFICATION FOR CONTRACT RECRUITMENT

BMRCL, invites applications from qualified personnel for appointment to the following post on Contract basis.

Name of the Post	No. of Posts
General Manager (Property Development)	01

Last date for receipt of online application is **27.04.2026** and for receipt of signed print with supporting documents is **4.00 P.M. on 30.04.2026.** For details regarding eligibility criteria, salary, application process and other information, please visit our website **www.bmrc.co.in**/Career Section.

Sd/-
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27L out of WB rolls after adjudication, maximum from Muslim, Matua belts

Those Left Out Counting On SC Hearing Scheduled For Mon

Tamaghna Banerjee, Kaushik Pradhan & Dwaipayan Ghosh | TNN

Kolkata: Shamsherganj and Lalgola constituencies of Bengal's Muslim-dominant Murshidabad district had the highest number of voters removed from the electoral rolls after post-SIR judicial adjudication, while the Purulia-Jhargram tribal belt reported the least deletions, based on collated Election Commission data released on Thursday.

The figures for Murshidabad — 74,775 deletions out of 1,08,400 names that were under adjudication in Shamsherganj, followed by 55,420 out of 99,082 in Lalgola — constitute a fraction of the 27-lakh purge reflected in supplementary rolls. The state's overall voter count now stands at 6.7 crore.

The assembly-wise breakup shows that besides Murshidabad, significant deletions took place in Malda, North Dinajpur, South 24-Parganas and Birbhum. Matua-dominant pockets of North 24-Parganas and Nadia lost voters, too.

Electoral rolls for the 142 constituencies going to polls in the second phase on April 29 were frozen on Thursday, which means no further additions, deletions or corrections will be allowed until elections are over. Lists for the other 152 constituencies that will vote in the first phase were sealed on April 6.

SC is scheduled to hear Bengal govt's plea for a review on April 13, leaving a small window of hope for the 27 lakh voters deleted from the rolls.

The scale of deletions in Shamsherganj assumes significance in view of the recent flare-ups in the area, including protests linked to the Waqf (Amendment) Act and clashes during Ram Navami processions. In neighbouring Malda, Mothabari has emerged as a flashpoint. On April 1, protests over deletion of voter names en bloc turned violent, with mobs blocking roads, clashing with security personnel and gheraoing judicial officers for several hours. More than 37,000 names out of 79,683 under adjudication in Mothabari were struck off the rolls.

In Krishnanagar North, Krishnanagar South, Ranaghat North West, Ranaghat North East and Ranaghat South, over 90% of those placed under adjudication didn't make the cut. Deletions ranged between 67% and 88% in all six assembly segments of Bongaon.

Since the release of the data earlier this week, Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee has repeatedly flagged what she terms "targeted exclusions".

Sukesh Chowdhury, secretary of the All India Matua Mahasangha, said mass exclusion from the voters' list had fuelled anxiety within the community. He said the CM's promise of legal support was reassuring.

Bikash Ghosh, of BJP's Bongaon unit, said affected voters would receive assistance in moving tribunals to seek restoration of their names.

Two of the state's most closely watched constituencies — Bhowanipore in Kolkata and Nandigram in East Midnapore — reported deletions that are below the state average.

Bhowanipore, where the CM is up against BJP's Suvendu Adhikari, had 27.5% deletions, with 3,893 out of 14,154 names under adjudication removed. In Nandigram, where Adhikari is contesting against former ally-turned-TMC candidate Pabitra Sarkar, 32.6% of voters under scrutiny — 3,461 out of 10,616 — were excluded.

In Purulia's Manbazar, only 71 names of the 2,771 voters under adjudication were struck off. Onda, also in Purulia, reported just 1% deletion.

THE BENGAL PURGE

Minority Belt	Judicial review	Deleted	Matua Belt	Judicial review	Deleted
Shamsherganj	1,08,400	69% | 74,775	Krishnanagar N	12,433	91.9% | 11,429
Lalgola	99,082	55.9% | 55,420	Krishnanagar S	12,765	93.9% | 11,989
Bhagabangola	1,09,435	43.4% | 47,493	Ranaghat N-W	15,041	93.3% | 14,029
Raghunathganj	1,15,087	40% | 46,100	Ranaghat N-E	22,694	91.6% | 20,796

Modi puts fish on poll menu to counter Mamata's attack

RohitKhanna @timesofindia.com

PM Modi addresses a public meeting in Asansol on Thursday

BATTLEGROUND WEST BENGAL

Kolkata: Bengal's favourite 'maachh-bhaat' filled the poll plate on Thursday as PM Narendra Modi accused Trinamool Congress of failing to feed the piscine-loving state enough fish, seeking to turn on its head a debate triggered by CM Mamata Banerjee's party portraying BJP as being "anti-non-vegetarian".

In Haldia, where he addressed the first of his three poll rallies for the day, the PM spoke extensively about Bengal underperforming in fish production under successive TMC govts. "In 15 years, TMC couldn't even give you fish. We created a separate ministry for fisheries," Modi said. "Bihar and Assam used to import fish. Now, they are self-sufficient, having doubled their fish production. Bengal will also become self-reliant if BJP is voted to office."

Mamata responded to PM Modi's comments on "inadequate" fish production by insisting that the dependence on imports from Andhra and Bihar "has gone".

"You don't let people speak in Bengali. And then you come here to give us a lesson in fish production. You needn't worry about fish production in Bengal. First, answer why Bengalis in other states are stopped from eating fish or meat. I am not saying everyone must eat non-vegetarian food, but diet should be a matter of personal choice," she said.

Modi followed up his fish dig at TMC in Haldia by contrasting the party's alleged strategy of governing by "fear" with BJP's focus on building "trust", saying Bengal had become "a factory of infiltrators and bombs".

The PM bemoaned what he termed "lack of industrialisation and jobs", blaming its "reign of fear and intimidation" for industry taking flight. "The nation is exporting weapons made in India, but TMC has opened a cottage industry for crude bombs here," he said, also accusing the governing party of encouraging cattle smuggling. He said Mamata govt stalled central projects worth Rs 75,000 crore in state out of spite.

(WIth inputs from Suman Mandal & Mohammad Asif)

Deletions EC's 'concessions' to BJP: Mamata

Kolkata/Minakhan: The Election Commission's "concessions to BJP" were "deletions for common people", CM Mamata Banerjee said Thursday, adding people will never forgive BJP. BJP had "sold democracy as if a 'Chaitra sale' was on", she said.

Addressing a poll rally in North 24 Parganas, Mamata said, "To forcefully capture Bengal with the help of bohiragotos (outsiders), names of over 90 lakh voters have been deleted. Despite this, Trinamool will win. I have fought against the wrongful deletions in SC because of which 32 lakh electors have been retained. I will ensure that no legitimate voter is left out."

The Bengal CM urged those struck off the rolls to appeal before tribunals, asserting she would fight for every voter, irrespective of religion or political inclination.

Countering the PM's allegation that Trinamool had created a "factory of infiltrators", Mamata said, "Who controls the borders and central forces? BSF is under them. Then who is responsible?" She also labelled the PM "the biggest bohiragoto".

— **Dwaipayan Ghosh & Sanjib Chakraborty**

POLL VAULT

CPM's Baby writes to CEC on WB SIR

CPM general secretary MA Baby has written to EC expressing "grave concern" over large-scale deletion of voters from Bengal poll rolls. In his letter to CEC Gyanesh Kumar, Baby said, "SIR represents a systematic exercise in mass disenfranchisement, marked by arbitrary criteria such as 'logical consistency' and increasing reliance on algorithm-driven exclusions."

AJUP nominee files papers in Kaliganj

Bengal SIR appellate tribunal restored the name of AJUP's Kaliganj constituency candidate, Kechhabuddin Sekh, enabling him to file nomination on Thursday, the last date for filing papers. Sekh has reportedly become the third contestant to have his name restored.

FIR against TMC's Nandigram nominee

TMC's Nandigram nominee Pabitra Kar was booked for alleged assault, intimidation and loot — first such case against any candidate since MCC came into effect in Bengal. Buddhadeb Giri said Kar and three others pressured him to chant "Joy Bangla" and assaulted him when he refused. He said Rs 3,700 and a watch were taken.

Cong files FIR against Assam candidate

Congress' Assam unit filed an FIR against its Udalguri seat candidate, Suren Daimary, who resigned from the party on the eve of assembly polls, accusing it of working "only for 'Miyas' (a pejorative term used for Bangladeshi Muslims), but not doing anything for the ST community".

SIR woes: 97-yr-old voter deleted, elderly dies in tribunal queue

Poulami Roy, Dipawali Mitra & Ashis Poddar | TNN

Kolkata/Ranaghat: A 97-year-old Partition refugee who never missed a vote is struck off the rolls. A 72-year-old retired teacher who presided over a dozen polls is deleted despite papers. A 68-year-old collapsed and died in a tribunal queue. Fallout from SIR has rippled across Bengal.

Subarna Bala Poddar, born in undivided Bengal and displaced in 1947, has voted in every election since eligibility. Her name is now missing. Unaware of the omission, she said: "Shorir dile vote debo (If health permits, I will vote)." If she fails to vote? She shot back: "I have a voter's card. Why can't I vote?"

Her family from Narkeldanga in Kolkata said she earlier used the home voting facility. This time, despite submitting voter ID, Aadhaar, passbook and widow pension records, her claim failed. A spelling error — "Swarna Bala" in 2002 rolls — triggered a hearing, and documents were rejected. Fresh inclusion via Form 6 also failed. Four of eight family members will vote; four, including two grandsons, have lost rights. A TMC booth agent said the rolls in that area fell from 1,326 to 1,092.

Subarna Bala Poddar is a resident of Narkeldanga North Road

In Hooghly, S Asraful Haque, a retired teacher who served as presiding officer in 12 elections, has been deleted while his family remains on rolls. He produced a passport, land records, PAN, Aadhaar and bank papers. "We have been living here for generations. I have ancestral land records from 1944. In the 1956 voter list, my parents' names were there, and I have that document. My name was there in the 2002 list. Still, I was called for a hearing. No specific reason was mentioned in the notice," he said.

He has appealed to a tribunal. "Is it possible to delete the name of a person who has a passport, land records and pension order?" he asked after finding himself under adjudication and then in a supplementary deletion list.

In Nadia's Ranaghat, Jibankrishna Biswas died after collapsing while waiting in a queue outside an SDO office to file an appeal over deletion of his and his daughter's names. His kin blamed stress linked to SIR. TMC staged a protest, blaming the Centre for his death. "Politics took his life," his daughter said.

Across districts, families recounted hearings without clear reasons, documents deemed insufficient, and sudden shifts from "adjudication" to deletion. For many, the right to vote has turned into a race through offices, queues and paperwork, with no guarantee of return.

Nandalal Bose's kin gets back voting rights

A tribunal ordered reinstatement of artist Nandalal Bose's grandson Suprabuddha Sen, 88, and his 82-year-old wife following a Supreme Court nudge for urgent hearing. Sen said restoration of voting rights may have come due to attention on

Sunali fights 'B'deshi' tag, but parents are on electoral roll

Kolkata: The parents of Sunali Khatun, 26, the Bengal woman pushed into Bangladesh as an "illegal immigrant" last year, have their names on the voters list, strengthening her citizenship claims even as a legal battle continues for her husband and other kin packed off to the neighbouring country.

Sunali's mother, Jyotsna Bibi, was among the lakhs "under adjudication" but later made it to the list; and her father, Bhodu Sheikh, had been cleared in the Dec 2025 SIR draft list.

Sunali broke into tears when she found her parents' names on the list. Their names figured in the 2002 voter list — the reference date for SIR. Sunali is herself not a voter yet but has applied for inclusion.

"I'm angry that we were tagged Bangladeshis. We are Indian citizens. Yet, we had to suffer. I could not give my kids new clothes on Eid. My husband is in Bangladesh; my kids cry for him every day. My father is unwell and can't work," she said.

— **Srishti Lakhotia**

BJP nominee, out on bail with 56 criminal cases, files papers

Dwaipayan.Ghosh @timesofindia.com

Kolkata: Arrested in the Vidyasagar statue vandalism case in 2019, BJP's **Rakesh Singh** filed his nomination on Thursday, the final day for submissions, from the Kolkata Port seat while carrying a portrait of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, a 19th-century social reformer and one of Bengal's icons.

The state govt had earlier informed Calcutta high court that Singh is a historysheeter and has 56 criminal cases against him in which he has been granted bail.

Singh, who was in Presidency Jail for five-and-a-half months, was released after the HC granted interim bail on April 6 to contest the assembly polls. Singh's election affidavit, which must declare all pending criminal cases against him, was unavailable on the EC website until Thursday night.

With rain playing spoilsport, Singh's much-hyped nomination procession featuring Suvendu Adhikari and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut had to be cancelled, and he was accompanied by family members and 12-15 supporters as he went to file his papers.

He said Trinamool govt had falsely accused him of vandalising Vidyasagar's bust. "My mother did not raise me to be a hooligan," said Singh, raising Vidyasagar's portrait above his head. "I will campaign from Friday and will reach every corner to prove there is no 'mini Pakistan' here," he added.

Singh faces no fewer than 91 cases. The BJP candidate said several established netas had even larger numbers of "politically motivated" cases against them.

Trinamool video shows Kabir-like man seeking '₹1k cr from BJP'

Kolkata: TMC on Thursday released a video in which a man resembling breakaway MLA **Humayun Kabir** is heard seeking Rs 1,000 crore from BJP in exchange for support after this month's Bengal elections and saying Muslim voters have to be "misled" to achieve the desired outcome.

The 19-minute video features a conversation between the man and an individual whose face is not visible. He is heard discussing seat projections, financial demands and a strategy to influence Muslim voters. The authenticity of the video, which TMC said was recorded on Dec 19, 2025, could not be independently verified.

Kabir denied the allegations, calling the video AI-generated and accusing TMC of a conspiracy to discredit him. "If they have proof of any meeting or nexus with BJP, let them show it. If proven, I will accept it. Otherwise, I will file cases. My growing influence among the community has unnerved TMC," he said.

Kabir's Aam Janata Unnayan Party has allied with Owaisi's AIMIM and fielded candidates in over 100 seats. Kabir was with TMC till last year.

— **Tamaghna Banerjee**

RG Kar victim's mom enters fray amid 'we want justice' slogan

Sanjib Chakraborty | TNN

Kolkata: The RG Kar rape-murder victim's mother, a BJP candidate in West Bengal, once again used her saree to convey a message — this time wearing one inscribed with 'Shaktirupena Sangsthita (embodiment of strength)' — as she filed her nomination Thursday.

She had earlier drawn attention by campaigning in a saree imprinted with the slogan "Merudanda Bikri Nei (My spine is not for sale)".

She was accompanied by former Union minister Smriti Irani and Tripura ex-CM Biplab Deb. Before submitting her nomination, she visited a Shiva-Kali temple with her husband and local BJP functionaries and supporters.

A rally was then taken out, with BJP workers raising "We want justice" slogans as she reiterated her call to oust the TMC govt. Addressing a gathering, Irani said, "This mother is not just a BJP candidate; she represents every woman in Bengal. Under her leadership, Bengal will get justice."

According to the affidavit, the total value of her movable assets — including several bank fixed deposits, savings accounts and jewellery — is Rs 19 lakh. Among these, she owns a car worth Rs 8 lakh, jointly with her husband. The total value of her husband's movable assets stands at Rs 36 lakh.

'Show courtesy': Didi at victim's home turf

Without directly referring to the RG Kar rape-murder, Bengal CM **Mamata Banerjee**, during her first political campaign where the victim's family stays, sent out a subtle message asking everyone to "maintain boundaries" and show "courtesy" to each other. "No matter how much drama or deceit there is, remember one thing: If someone is a candidate, they have the right to speak for themselves. But elections are part of politics. One political person can certainly speak to another political person. However, I will not make any derogatory remarks. You should also maintain courtesy," said Banerjee.

On April 5, a viral video purportedly showed the BJP candidate threatening the CM with assault. The remark prompted MP Kalyan Banerjee to complain to EC about the RG Kar victim's mother.

The CM claimed despite the state taking action in law and order cases, it was being "unnecessarily maligned". "They say we have destroyed Bengal — tell me, are you not happy here? This is a large state; if something happens, we act immediately. Why malign Bengal?" the CM asked. — **Dwaipayan Ghosh & Sanjib Chakraborty**

Sriperumbudur: In martyr's land, Cong chief fights a tough battle

Chennai: Before any election, Congress starts its seat-share talks with a precondition: the Sriperumbudur seat should be for the party. "That's where the temple of our leader is," said Tamil Nadu Congress Committee chief K Selvaperunthagai, referring to the memorial of late PM Rajiv Gandhi.

BATTLEGROUND TAMIL NADU

He won the seat in 2021; now he is seeking reelection. Despite all the emotional connection, the contest this time looks tough. Voters complain he is rarely seen in the constituency, especially after he became TNCC chief in 2024.

During his campaign trail, Selvaperunthagai has been forced to devote most of his time explaining his inability to visit the constituency often. "People expect their MLA to visit every village, but that is not possible..." he added.

— **Yazhiniyan**

ED traces realtor's links to netas, babus in Bengal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: During a search in Kolkata at seven premises on Wednesday in an ongoing money laundering probe against Merlin group, a real estate developer, the ED has found the builder having associations with some senior politicians and bureaucrats from Bengal.

"The role of these public servants and their financial transactions with the real estate group and its promoters are under scrutiny," sources in ED said. The action comes ahead of polls in WB, with voting scheduled for April 23 and April 29.

Officials aware of the probe said the agency has seized some "incriminating digital devices and documents from the builder's premises that reveal his deep nexus with state officials and politicians".

To further establish a money trail in its ongoing investigation, ED is examining Merlin group promoter Sushil Mohta, Saket Mohta and other related entities. Sources said the agency is examining some documents which were fabricated to fraudulently grab various parcels of land in Kolkata, including public land too.

"Subsequently, the accused people commercially exploited the land by launching large-scale real estate projects. By projecting themselves as lawful owners on the strength of forged documents, they have induced the public to invest substantial sums in their projects," a senior official said.

Pawan Khera's pre-arrest bail plea: HC holds order for today

Hyderabad: Telangana HC on Thursday reserved its order on the anticipatory bail plea filed by Congress' **Pawan Khera** in connection with a case registered against him over his allegations against Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma.

The matter came up before Justice K Sujana, who posted it to Friday for orders after recording submissions from both the sides.

Senior counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing virtually for Khera, submitted that the case was "politically motivated, vindictive and malafide", and that "every imaginable offence" had been added in the FIR just to "harass" the petitioner. Himanta's comments against Khera using abusive language and his move to send over 100 policemen from Assam to the petitioner's Delhi residence showed attempts to "silence and intimidate" him, he argued.

Opposing the bail plea, Assam's advocate general, Devajit Saikia, countered that the case was not just about defamation but went much beyond and involved a bigger conspiracy requiring a detailed investigation. — **Pinto Deepak**

HC okays EVM, VVPAT check in Chandivali poll petition

Mumbai: Following a Bombay HC order, EC has scheduled the examination of select EVMs of Chandivali assembly constituency along with VVPAT slips on April 16 and 17 on a plea by Congress' Naseem Khan, who lost the 2024 MLA elections. Bharat Electronics representatives will examine the machines in the presence of Khan along with a technical expert suggested by him.

Khan lost the election by a margin of 20,625 votes to Shiv Sena's Dilip Lande. He challenged Lande's election in the HC, urging it to disqualify Lande and declare him a winner, as he received the second highest number of votes. Khan made several allegations in the petition, including the visit of the then CM Eknath Shinde to the constituency on the day of the polling. Shinde was designated as a "star campaigner" of Shiv Sena, and the visit was allegedly converted into a campaign and road show which influenced the voters, Khan had alleged.

The court rejected Khan's petition but allowed his contention of examining EVMs. — **Vijay V Singh**

Sasikala takes front seat, invokes Jaya's name & style

Shanmughasundaram.J @timesofindia.com

Former chief minister J Jayalithaa often campaigned from her campaign vehicle, with her close aide V K Sasikala seated in the back, watching as constituents and media gathered around her van. Sasikala has now moved to the front.

Evoking memories of Jayalalithaa's roadshows, Sasikala delivers short speeches from her van at key constituencies in south Tamil Nadu. Only, she contests the 'two leaves' symbol. "I want people to decide whether they want a rule of betrayers and evil forces or one by selfless leaders," she says at Thiruparankundram in Madurai, before moving to Arapalayam.

On Arappalayam cross road, her party's candidate stands with folded hands on a platform about 300ft away, reminiscent of the way Jayalalithaa's candidates were presented during her campaigns.

In her five-minute speeches, she takes indirect jabs at AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami. Sasikala, who floated her party All India Puratchi Thalaivar Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam just before the election announcement, has fielded candidates in 75 constituencies. Most of them are from southern districts, eyeing Thevar votes.

She also recalls her association with Jayalalithaa. "As soon as I reached here, my mind goes back to the days when I visited the place with Amma," Sasikala says, turning emotional at Theni's Andipatti. A few people from the crowd reach out, asking her not to worry. "We are there for you," shouts one.

FROM 'CHINNAMMA' TO 'THYAGA THALAIVI': Sasikala, who usually sat in the back when Jayalalithaa was alive, has moved seats since

On the banners around, Sasikala is placed alongside MGR and Jayalalithaa, with posters calling her 'Thyaga Thalaivi' instead of 'Chinnamma'. Political observers note that while the presentation echoes Jayalalithaa, Sasikala's delivery differs.

"Sasikala's speech is slow and paced but lacks the modulation of Jayalalithaa, who often turned aggressive while targeting M Karunanidhi," says political commentator Durai Karuna.

He said Sasikala tried to replicate Jayalalithaa's persona by adopting the late leader's hairstyle and trademark green saree but has toned it down after criticism.

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POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH

XXXIX CONVOCATION

The XXXIX Convocation for conferring academic degrees to candidates in respect of **PhD, DM, MCh, MD, MS and MDS** courses whose terms have been completed till **December, 2025** will be held on **27th April, 2026** in the Bhargava Auditorium of PGIMER, Chandigarh. A rehearsal will be held on **Sunday, the 26th April, 2026 at 9:00 A.M.** in the Bhargava Auditorium. **It is compulsory for all recipients of degrees/medals to attend the rehearsal. Those who fail to participate in the rehearsal will not be allowed to take part on the day of Convocation.** Kindly intimate the confirmation for participation in the Convocation by **15th April, 2026 through google form link (bit.ly/39convocation). The list of awardees & detailed information is available on the website of the Institute. (http://pgimer.edu.in)**

UMMED MATHUR, REGISTRAR

Government of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation And Ground Water Development Division, Ballari

IFT No. EE/MI & GWDD/Bly/AE-2/2026-27/18
Date : 02.04.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION(KW-4)

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Division Ballari invited the tender for the work of under Head for Account 4702 Plan APB 2 works in Hosapete Taluk Vijayanagara Dist and 01 work in Ballari Tq Ballari Dist in Two Cover System Minimum Estimated amount put to tender is Rs.100.73 lakhs and Maximum Estimated amount put to tender is Rs.200.42 lakhs the tenderers should download and submitt the tenders from date : 04.04.2026 to 15.04.2026 upto 17.30 hours. Date & Time of opening Technical Bid is on 17.04.2026 at 11.00 hours. Opening of Financial Bid is on 21.04.2026 at 11.00 hours. Any other information should get by login the website "KPPP" http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
M.I. & G.W.D. Division, Ballari.
DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/42

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly Owned Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal Only))

BESCOM invites tender through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal for Procurement of 63 kVA, Star 1 (4 Star) Distribution Transformer.

Sl. No.	Description	Enquiry No.
1	**Procurement of 63 kVA, Star 1 (4 Star) Distribution Transformer Lot-1**	**BESCOM/2026-27/IND0227**
2	**Procurement of 63 kVA, Star 1 (4 Star) Distribution Transformer Lot-2**	**BESCOM/2026-27/IND0228**
3	**Procurement of 63 kVA, Star 1 (4 Star) Distribution Transformer Lot-3**	**BESCOM/2026-27/IND0229**

Bid Documents available from : **10.04.2026 onwards,** Last date for Bid Submission : **11.05.2026, 17:00 Hrs.** Opening of Bid Document : **12.05.2026 at 17:15 Hrs.**

The Tender can be obtained through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal web-site **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Aspiring Bidders need to register on Karnataka Public Procurement Portal. Further Bidders can take assistance with Karnataka Public Procurement Portal help desk contact numbers (+91-8046010000 +91-8068948777, 09240214000 & 09240214001) or email at **support@eprochelpdesk.com**

For Electricity Related Complaints Call: 1912
Download BESCOM MITHRA Mobile App.

Sd/-
Chief General Manager (Elec), Procurement, BESCOM, 4th Floor, K.R. Circle, Bengaluru-560 001

(DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION)
Karnataka Text Book Society(R)

6th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru - 560 003
E-mail:mdktbs.tender@gmail.com **Website:**https://textbooks.karnataka.gov.in
No.A8/KTBS/ADM/CAUT/1/2026 E-90795 Date :09.04.2026

SHORT-TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-Procurement portal only)

Short-term Tender is invited through the e-portal from **eligible firms of Chartered Accountants, approved by the Accountant General, Karnataka State, and having their head office in Bengaluru, for conducting internal audit of the Karnataka Textbook Society offices for the period from 2026–27 to 2028–29.** The audit will be conducted at the office of KTBS (head Office), district and taluk textbook depots, and the Divisional textbook depot in Bengaluru. Detailed information is available in the tender document on the e-portal and the department website. Interested and eligible firms may submit their bids through the e-portal **on or before 24.04.2026 by 5:30 PM.**

E-procurement portal address: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
Portal Help line: 080-46010000 / 68948777
Department Website:**https://textbooks.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Managing Director,
Karnataka Textbook Society (R) Bengaluru

KARNATAKA HOUSING BOARD
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.

Tender Notification
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

Karnataka Housing Board invites online percentage rate composite bids from CPWD/KPWD/Any other State Govt. registered eligible contractors in appropriate class/eligible firms/contractors of repute on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC MODE-1) turnkey basis under two bids system (Two Cover System) through Karnataka public procurement portal for below mentioned work.

Design, Engineering, Procurement and Construction of International Cricket Stadium and Allied Development Works at Suryanagara 4th Phase KHB Layout, Indlawadi, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District, Karnataka (EPC Mode-1).

Work Indent No.: KHB/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT 738 & IFT No.04/2026-27 Dated: 07.04.2026. **Amount put to tender:** Rs. 943.46 Crores.

Last date for pre-bid Query	:	**22.04.2026 up to 4.00 PM**
Pre-bid meeting	:	**24.04.2026 at 11.00 AM**
Last date for submission of bid	:	**08.05.2026 up to 4.00 PM**

For further information, contact below mentioned office address: Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru-560009. Telephone No: 080-22273511 and O/o the Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Suryanagara 4th Phase, No.52, BSR Layout, Konasandra, Jigani, Bengaluru-560105 Contact No.080-24482702, Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Karnataka Housing Board, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/108/AKAR/2026-27

RajCOMP Info Services Limited (RISL)
C-Block, 1st Floor, Yojana Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur

RISL invites e-bids from the eligible bidders for the following:

NIB No./ Date/ Unique bid no.	Particulars	Estimated Cost/EMD	Start of sale / Last date
RIS2627A0003 / 08.04.2026 RIS2627GLOB00003	RFP for Upgradation (replacement / upgrade) and Procurement of Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) & FMS of WS&APS Phase 1 Project in State of Rajasthan for 5 Years based on Open Competitive Bidding through e-Procurement / e-Tender.	Rs. 46.38 Cr.	08.04.2026 / 30.04.2026

Details can be seen on the websites **http://risl.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http://doitc.rajasthan.gov.in.** Bids are to be submitted through **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**

Raj.Samwad/C/26/577 **Additional Director**

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tendering Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

E-Tender No. : JHS-ENGG-C-2026-73	**Approx Cost : 103873656.85**
Description of work : JHS: Provision of freight customer amenities in existing goods shed at PAMAN Railway station.	
Earnest Money. : 2077500.00	**Date of closing Tender. : 28.04.2026 at 15:00 hrs.**
Date of completion/period from issue acceptance letter : 12 Months.	

• Tender online can be submitted up to 15:00 hrs on 28.04.2026 • For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **www.ireps.gov.in** **765/26 (AS)**

CPRONCR North central railways cproncrly CPRONCR www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

BENGALURU-MYSURU INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR AREA PLANNING AUTHORITY

No. 5, Second Floor, Looplane, Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560009.
Phone: 080-22341230/35 E-mail: bmicapa@gmail.com

No: BMICAPA/CLU-01/121/2025-26/41 Date: 09-04-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

(UNDER SEC 14(A) OF KTCP ACT, 1961)

Smt. Nagavenamma W/o. Krishnappa, Sri Munikrishna. D S/o. Late Doddapaiah, Sri Praveen Chhajer S/o. Ashok Chhajjer, Sri Vikas Bokaria S/o. Ranjith Singh Bokaria, Sri Kumaraswamy. T.H S/o. Late Hanumappa. D, Sri Shivanna. K.Y S/o. Yallappa. R have applied to this Authority seeking Change of land use from **"Agriculture"** Zone to **"Residential"** purpose pertaining to Sy.No: **122** extent of 02 Acre - 20 Guntas and Sy.No: **123** extent of 03 Acre - 20 Guntas Totally measuring **06 Acre** of **Kumbalagodu Gollahalli Village,** Kengeri Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk under Sec 14(A) of KTCP Act 1961. The foresaid land is reserved for **Agriculture Zone** in Approved Master Plan. Applicant has stated that the change of land use sought is in the interest of public by quoting the following:

1) By developing the Layout in the above said land, General Public will get the Sites for reasonable Price.
2) During the development works of the Layout there will be opportunity of employment for labourers.
3) Surrounding areas will be developed by developing the Layout in the above said lands.
4) By planned layout, the public are benefited with the civic amenities such as good Roads, UGD, Electrical facilities and Parks etc.,

Objections, if any, are invited from the public, any person may file his / her objection to **Member Secretary, BMICAPA, Bengaluru** in writing to the above address mentioned in this publication within 15 days from this notice. Any objections received after stipulated time will not be considered.

Sd/- Member Secretary,
B.M.I.C.A.P.A., Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/116/Adverto/2026-27

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Corrigendum to Tender Notice No.
CAO/CN/BNC/177/2026 Dated : 16-03-2026

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Conducting Final location survey for New line between Shivamogga Town (SMET) - Sringeri Mangaluru (MAJN) (332 km), Talguppa (TLGP) - Honnavar (HNA) (95 km) Almatti (LMT) - Yadgir (YG) (162 km) and Bhadravati (BDVT) - Chikjajur (JRU) (73 km). **(Tender Ref. No. SWR-FLS-RATE-CONTRACT-03R)**	Rs. 33,52,62,609/-

Date of Closing	
Existing	**Modified**
09-04-2026 (15:00 Hrs.)	**21-04-2026 (15:00 Hrs)**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Engineer / Construction / Works
Bengaluru Cantonment

PUB/20/AAS/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform ticktes, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಸಾಂಕ್ರಾಮಿಕ ರೋಗಗಳ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ

ಹಳೇ ಮದ್ರಾಸು ರಸ್ತೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-560 038.
ಇ-ಮೇಲ್: edh.bang@gmail.com, ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 080-25510258

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:DHFWS/2026-27/SE2145 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 09.04.2026

ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ
(ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾತ್ರ)

ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಸಾಂಕ್ರಾಮಿಕ ರೋಗಗಳ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಹಳೇ ಮದ್ರಾಸು ರಸ್ತೆ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-38. ಇಲ್ಲಿಗೆ 2026-27ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ (ದಿನಾಂಕ: 31.03.2027ಕ್ಕೆ ಅಂತ್ಯಗೊಳ್ಳುವಂತೆ) ಹೊರಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದಲ್ಲಿ **ಗ್ರೂಪ್ 'ಡಿ' ಮತ್ತು ನಾನ್ ಕ್ಲಿನಿಕಲ್ ಸೇವೆ** ಒದಗಿಸಲು ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 08.05.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 4:30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ.** ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಕಛೇರಿಯಿಂದ ಕೆಲಸದ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು ಅಥವಾ ವೆಬ್ ಸೈಟ್ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಜಾಹೀರಾತು/ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ/ಪಿಆರ್/127/2026-27 **ಸಹಿ/- ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಶಸ್ತ್ರ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸಕರು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.**

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of India Undertaking)

E-Tender Notice

Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Special Limited Tender in Single Packet System through E-Tendering on IREPS portal from eligible contractors for the following work. **Name of Work:** Detailed Design Consultancy (DDC) and Site Services / Supervision - (i) for the construction of two new Tunnels - one parallel to the existing 544 m long Old Goa Tunnel, and the other parallel to the existing 1561 m long Pernem Tunnel and also (ii) for the rehabilitation of the existing Old Goa and Pernem Tunnels on the Konkan Railway route, in the State of Goa, India. **Tender Notice No.: KR/W/09/2026/02. Advertised Cost of the work:** Rs.17,13,50,000/- (exclusive of GST). **Closing Date/Time:** 30.04.2026 up to 15:00 hrs for submission of online Offers/Bids. **Completion Period:** 38 (Thirty-Eight) Months. Manual offers shall not be accepted. Please visit www.ireps.gov.in website for details/participation. Corrigendum/addendum will be hosted in this website only.

पिंपरी चिंचवड महानगरपालिका, पिंपरी -४११०१८
यांत्रिकी विभाग
ई - निविदा सुचना क्र. ०१/२०२६-२७

म.न.पा.च्या आरोग्य विभागाचे नाले सफाईच्या कामकाजासाठी मशिनरी व आवश्यक मनुष्यबळ ३ वर्षे कालावधीकीरता भाडेतत्वावर घेणेकामी दर मागविणेत येत आहेत.

अ. क्र.	कामाचा तपशील	निविदा र.रु. (तीन वर्षे कालावधीसाठी)	बयाणा र.रु.	अनामत र.रु.	कामाचा कालावधी	निविदा फॉर्म फी परत न मिळणारी
१.	म.न.पा.च्या आरोग्य विभागाचे नाले सफाईच्या कामकाजासाठी प्रपत्र अ येथे नमुद केलेल्या मशिनरी भाडेतत्वावर वापरुन कामकाज करणेकरीता ३ वर्षे कालावधीकीरता दर मागविणेत येत आहेत.	१०,१५,००,०००/-	५,०७,५००/-	५०,७५,०००/-	०३ वर्षे	७२,९९०/-

निविदेचे वेळापत्रक

१	ई निविदा उपलब्ध कालावधी	दि. १३/०४/२०२६ ते दि. २०/०४/२०२६
२	निविदा स्विकृती अंतिम दिनांक व वेळ	दि. २०/०४/२०२६ दुपारी ३.०० पर्यंत
३	निविदा उघडणेचा दिनांक	दि. २१/०४/२०२६
४	प्रिबिड मिटींग दिनांक	दि. १५/०४/२०२६ स. ११.०० वा. मा. सह शहर अभियंता (वि) १ यांचे कार्यालय, पिं.चिं.म. न.पा. मुख्य प्रशासकीय इमारत, विद्युत विभाग, पहिला मजाल, पिंपरी ४११ ०१८

कोणतेही कारण न देता निविदा पुर्णत: किंवा अंशत: मंजूर अथवा नामंजूर करणेचा अधिकार मा. आयुक्त यांनी स्वत:कडे राखून ठेवला आहे. निविदा संचाची विक्री **http://mahatenders.gov.in** या संकेत स्थळावर ई- निविदा सुचनेत नमूद केलेल्या तारखेनुसार सुरू राहील. सविस्तर निविदा व निविदेबाबतची इतर माहिती **http://mahatenders.gov.in** या संकेत स्थळावर उपलब्ध आहे. सदरची ई – निविदा प्रणाली वापराबाबत काही अडचण निर्माण झाल्यास NIC यांचेकडील ई-मेल **support.eproc.@nic.in** अथवा help Desk Number -0120-4200462, 0120-4001005, 0120- 6277787 या दुरध्वनीवर संपर्क साधावा.

सही/-
सह शहर अभियंता(वि)-१
पिंपरी चिंचवड महानगरपालिका
पिंपरी-१८

जाहीरात क्र. २०२६-२७/११

34001/23/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail: ceroads.bbsr@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. CE-Roads-II-13/2025-26

1. The Chief Engineer (Roads-II), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover system through ONLINE MODE form eligible contractors for Roadwork as mentioned below:
2. Nature of work : Road works
3. No. of work : 13 Nos.
4. Tender Paper cost : Rs. 10,000.00
5. Class of Contractor : 'A' Class/Special Class/Super Class
6. Available of bid document the website : From 10.00 A.M. of 13.04.2026 to 5.30 PM of 04.05.2026
7. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.05.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M.
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tenderodisha.gov.in.** Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Roads-II), Odisha
OIPR-34001/34111/1/26-27/0001

34001/42/2627

E-mail ID : cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in
cebuildings@rediffmail.com
Tel. (0674)-2391523

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL),
ODISHA NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No.-B-I-Sports-06/2025 12470 / Bhubaneswar, the 9th April., 2026
Invitation for Bids
1st Corrigendum

Tender Reference No. CE-Bldg-II-57/2025-26

1. Name of the Works:
   (1) **"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Kalimela Block under Malkangiri District".**
   (2) **"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Khairaput Block under Malkangiri District".**
   (3) **"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Kudumulgoma Block under Malkangiri District".**
   (4) **"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Podia Block under Malkangiri District".**
   (5) **"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Mathili Block under Malkangiri District".**
   (6) **"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Baipariguda Block under Koraput District".**

The following changes have been made in Bid Identification No. **CE-Bldg-II-57/2025-26**

1. Bid documents such as DTCN / BOQ etc. can be seen / downloaded from the Govt. Website i.e. **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**, during the period from **dt.16.04.2026 to 17.00 hours of dt.04.05.2026** instead of dt.30.03.2026 to dt.20.04.2026 for ONLINE BIDDING respectively.
2. Online bids shall be received till **17.00 Hours of dt.04.05.2026** instead of dt.20.04.2026.
3. The technical bids will be opened at **11.30 A.M. of dt.05.05.2026** instead of dt.21.04.2026.

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer, Buildings-II (I/c), Odisha, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-34001/34117/1/26-27/0006

13001/125/2627

BERHAMPUR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, GANJAM
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

Letter No. 6628/ **Date- 04/04/2026**

Invitation for Bids
NATIONAL COMPETATIVE BIDDING THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT
Bid Identification No BMC (BAM):-323/2025-2026

1	**The Municipal Commissioner, Berhampur, invites percentage rate bids in ONLINE MODE only, as per annexure "A"**	
2	**Nature of work**	Civil work
3	**No. of work**	04 Nos.
4	**Bid Cost.**	The bidders shall remit online the cost of bid document for amount through the process as mentioned in the DTCN as per Annexure "A"
5	**E.M.D**	The bidder shall remit online the Earnest Money Deposit/Bid Security at the rate of 1 % of the estimated cost put to tender as mentioned under DTCN. Bidders desirous to hire machineries or equipments from outside the State or owned but deployed outside the State are required to remit online 2% of the amount put to tender as Bid Security. Exemption from EMD is permissible as per codal provisions of Govt. Of Odisha, as per Annexure "A"
6	**Class of Contractor**	AS per the Annexure "A"
7	**Availability of Bid Documents in the website**	From 11.00 hrs.of 09/04/26 to 17.00 hrs. of 27/04/2026
9	**Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bids**	11:00 hrs. onwards on Dt. 28/04/26
10	**Date & time of opening of financial bids**	Shall be intimated to the responsive Technically qualified bidder after evolution of Technical bids.
10	**Mode of submission of tender**	Tender Should submitted On line in **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**
11	**The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.**	

Sd/-
Commissioner,
Berhampur Municipal Corporation
Berhampur, Odisha
OIPR-13001/13035/1/26-27/0001

25001/2/2627

By E_Mail/e-Despatch
E_Mail ID: serwcbaripada@gmail.com
Ph-No-06792-261343/261344
Gangraj, Baripada

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BARIPADA
"e" Procurement Notice for Bridge Works
Identification No.- Online Tender- Bridge N.C.B. No. 409 for 2025-26.
Letter No. 2153 / Date : 30.03.2026

1. Name of the work : Bridge works under SBY in the District of Mayurbhanj
2. Total No. of work : 03 Nos (Three)
3. Estimated Cost : **Rs.339.74 lakhs to Rs.658.31 lakhs (approximately).**
4. Eligible Class of Contractor : **As per annexure.**
5. Period of Completion : **As per annexure.**
6. Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/O C.C.E.R.W. Circle, Baripada	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Baripada	Bridge On-line N.C.B. No. 409	Dt. 15.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M	Dt.29.04.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt. 28.04.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.30.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

- **Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.**
- **Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the above e_tender website only.**

Sd/- **Er. A.K Naik**
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W. Circle, Baripada.
OIPR-25001/25130/1/26-27/0001

15001/8/2627

Government of Odisha
Information and Public Relations Department

No. IPR-FP-GP-0005-2026/5956/IPR Dated: 09.04.2026

Request For Proposal

The Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Odisha, invites **Request for Proposal** to select a competent Agency for **Supply, Installation, Operation and Maintenance of 65 (Sixty-Five) Outdoor Digital LED Display Boards** at designated locations in and around Puri for the occasion of **Puri Shri Jagannath Rath Yatra 2026 for a fixed-duration on rental/operational basis for a period of 15 (Fifteen) days.**

The purpose of these LED Display Boards is to serve as a mass-communication and public-information infrastructure during the Rath Yatra, including real-time crowd and traffic updates, temple ritual live feeds, and emergency health and safety messages.

Proposals, duly signed and complete in all respects, must reach the Department by **4:00 PM on 30.04.2026** through Speed Post/ Registered Post /Courier. Evaluation of documents will be held on **02.05.2026 at 11:30 AM** in the Conference Hall, I&PR Department, Bhubaneswar.

Further details can be seen on the website: **https://inpr.odisha.gov.in & https://odisha.gov.in.** Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of the tender can also be seen in the said websites only.

Sd/-
Director
OIPR-15001/15001/1/26-27/0008

13001/122/2627

Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited
5th Floor, ICOMC Tower, Unit-9, Bhubaneswar - 751022
E-mail Id: bbsr.bscl@gmail.com, CIN: U74990OR2016PLC020016
Telephone - 0674-2548428 FAX: 0674-2540811

BID IDENTIFICATION No. 658/ENGG/BSCL/2026-27 **Date: 07.04.2026**

General Manager (Engg) BSCL on behalf of Bhubaneswar Smart City Ltd. Bhubaneswar invites following item rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible bidders as mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approximate value of the Work (Rs in Lakhs) Excl. GST	Period of Completion	Class of Contractor	Bid Security (EMD)	Cost of Tender Document + GST (in INR)	Availability of Tender
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Renovation of Smart Park at Saheed Nagar Bhubaneswar for the year 2026-27.	49.34	03 (Three Calendar Months)	"B" Class	1% of the Estimated Cost put to tender	INR 6,000/- non-refundable + INR 1,080/- (GST)	13.04.2026 to 27.04.2026 5.30 PM
2	Repair & Renovation of Integrated Public Service Centre (IPSC) at Saheed Nagar Bhubaneswar for the year 2026-27.	14.17	02 (Two Calendar Months)	"C" & "D" Class			

Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tendersodisha.gov.in.** Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-
General Manager, (Engg.)
BBSR Smart City Limited, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-13001/13070/1/26-27/0002

Match screenings drive weekend crowds at venues in Bengaluru

"Those who can't make it to the stadium, live match screenings are the next best thing"

Why fans are choosing screenings over stadiums

- Comfortable environment for families and groups with food and drinks available
- Affordable ticket prices compared to stadium entry
- Interactive elements like games and contests during breaks
- Ability to skip the crowds, traffic and long queues

A stadium feel, minus the chaos

Areas crafted especially for the match-day vibes

Private screenings, personalised fun

"You can stand, dance and cheer for your team. It's just like going to a stadium, you're more involved in your seat. Here, the vibe is more relaxed and fun"

"People tend to stay longer and order more, especially when they're watching a game"

How To: Host the ultimate match screening at home

GET THE SCREEN RIGHT

DON'T SKIP THE SOUND

CREATE MATCH DAY SNACKS

DRESS THE PART

KEEP THE ENERGY GOING

TRACK THE VIBE

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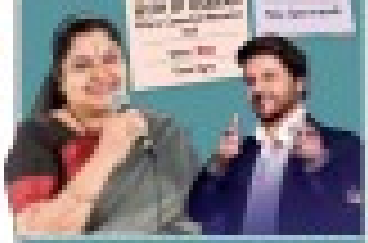
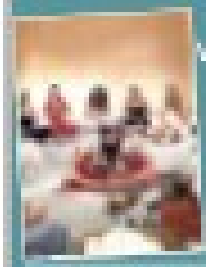
If you love music



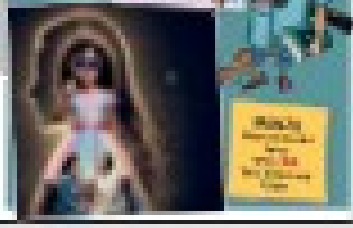
If you're into dance

If you're into comedy

If you're into workshops



If you're into theatre



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All Inclusive (only GST extra)
₹6576 per sq ft.

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~~₹53.75 Lakhs~~
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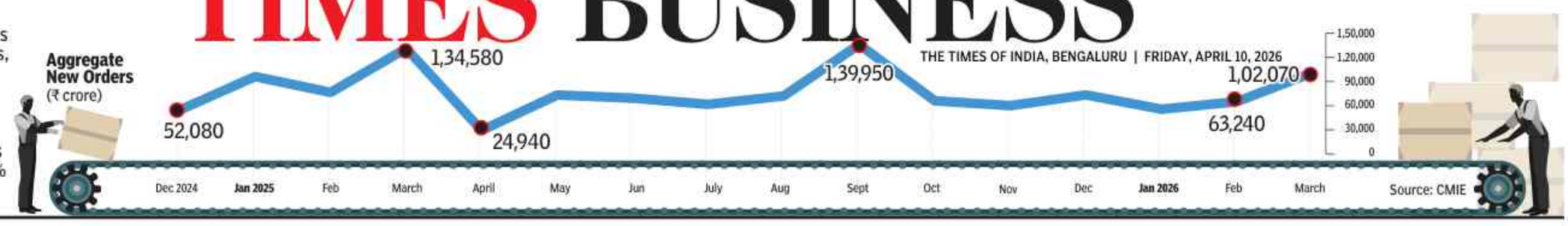
TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026

New Orders Stage Recovery in March

At ₹1,02,070 crore, companies witness 61% growth in new orders in March 2026. On an annual basis, total new orders for FY26 stood at ₹8.5 lakh crore, a 10% YoY increase. While this represents the highest annual order inflow on record, the pace of growth has slowed compared to 34% and 37% recorded in preceding two years



Exporters flag concerns over shipping costs, scheme gaps

Also Seek Steps To Address Shortage In Packaging Material

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Indian exporters on Thursday flagged their concern over the charges being levied by shipping lines as well as gaps in the ECGC scheme announced by commerce department, while seeking measures to address concerns related to packaging material, which is in short supply.

At a meeting on the West Asia crisis with commerce secretary Rajesh Agrawal and shipping secretary Vijay Kumar, exporters also complained about the shortage of bunker oil at ports, such as Paradip and Haldia and demanded adequate supplies.

Besides, they complained about shipping lines not passing on the benefits of lower charges or waivers in a transparent manner. A leading exporter said that shipping companies were seeking upfront payment and promising to adjust it later. "The benefit should be given upfront," said Fieo director general Ajai Sahay.

While DG Shipping sought to address this concern, exporters said govt has little control over foreign lines. On Wednesday, it instructed port authorities to ensure that concessions for Gulf-bound cargo passed on immediately and transparently.

"We were receiving complaints that terminal operators were not immediately passing on some concessions granted by port authorities, particularly relating to detention charges, ground rent, reefer plug-in charges and similar other charges to exporters. But they were giving that on reimbursement basis... It should not happen that they will charge the exporter and then subsequently say after one month or 15 days they will reimburse that. The relief should be immediate," said Mukesh Mangal, additional secretary in shipping ministry.

EEPC India chairman Pankaj Chadha said shipping lines were picking up Dubai-bound cargo from, say Kochi, and were returning to India and leaving it at another port, and were not responding to requests to bring it back to Kochi or bearing the transport cost.

Some exporters also flagged problems with ECGC scheme, announced by the commerce department, arguing that payments linked to bank realisation of export proceeds would result in the package proving to be a non-starter. Besides, they demanded that the benefit should be extended to goods going via ports in Egypt, Jordan and Sudan as well.

FREIGHT FRIGHT

Pre-war to now	Feb 26 to April 9
JNPT to Rotterdam: 1,000 to 2,000	Shanghai to Los Angeles: 2,191 to 2,308
JNPT to Mombasa: 1,250 to 1,800	Shanghai to Rotterdam: 2,094 to 2,910
JNPT to Savannah (US): 1,700 to 2,500	World Container Index: 1,899 to 2,309
JNPT to Agadir (Morocco): 2,100 to 3,300	All data in $ per 40-feet container
All data in $ per 20-feet container; Source: Industry	Source: Drewry

Packaging material woes

Apart from "artificial shortages" due to stockpiling, at another meeting called by Agrawal, AEPC secretary general Mithileshwar Thakur suggested that prices of plastic material have soared by up to 50%, while glass prices are 8-20% higher and suggested duty exemption for some of the packaging polymers, whose availability was hit due to the conflict in Iran.

Indian-origin Arora becomes youngest general partner at YC

Bengaluru: Indian-origin entrepreneur **Harshita Arora** has been appointed general partner at Y Combinator (YC), becoming the youngest in the firm's history. Arora joined YC as a visiting partner in its Summer 2025 batch.

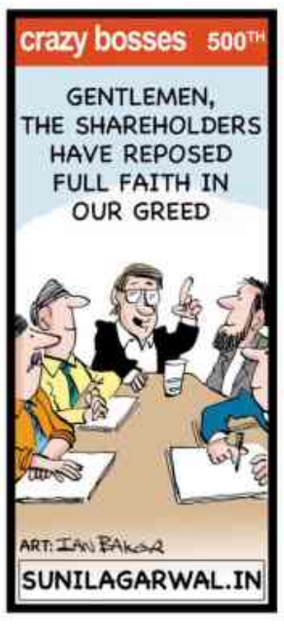
A native of Saharanpur, Arora began coding at 13 and dropped out of school at 15 to pursue it full-time. By 16, she had built Crypto Price Tracker, a cryptocurrency portfolio management app featured by Apple and later acquired. She was also awarded the Bal Shakti Puraskar, one of India's highest honours for young achievers. She later moved to San Francisco on an O-1 visa and co-founded AtoB, a fintech startup focused on payments infrastructure for the trucking industry, as part of YC's Summer 2020 batch. "She brings deep fintech and infrastructure experience, a founder's instinct for product, and the perspective of someone who's been building companies since she was a teenager," YC said in a blog post announcing her appointment. TNN

Titan grows 46% YoY, jewellery demand up

Bengaluru: Titan posted a strong performance for the March quarter of FY26, with overall consumer businesses growing 46% year-on-year, led by robust demand in its core jewellery segment and improving buyer sentiment. The company said consumer sales rose 52% YoY. Titan's flagship jewellery business grew 46% in Q4FY26. "The steep increase in gold prices notwithstanding, business recorded high single-digit buyer growth in Q4FY26 after nearly-flat trends in the previous three quarters," the company said. TNN

Capri Global to raise ₹500cr through bonds

Mumbai: India's Capri Global Capital will raise Rs 500 crore through its maiden public bond issue, and will rely more on debt markets than bank loans for funding this fiscal year. The issuance marks the first tranche of a larger Rs 2,000 crore plan through public issues. It will offer annual coupon rates of 9 % for two-year bonds. REUTERS



Sensex slips 931 pts as Gulf truce looks fragile, oil rises

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: With the US-Iran ceasefire in West Asia looking fragile, sensex gave up part of Wednesday's gains to close 931 points lower at 76,632 points on Thursday as foreign funds continued to lead the selloff.

Investors around the world were skeptical about the continuation of the truce that was announced on Tuesday as Israel, a US ally, continued to pound Lebanon. In Japan, Nikkei closed 0.7% lower while in late trades in the UK, FTSE was down 0.3%. Across the Atlantic, in the US, the three major indices—Dow Jones, Nasdaq Composite and S&P 500—were all flat in mid-session after opening marginally in the red. In late evening trades Brent was hovering near the psychologically important $100/barrel mark.

Selling by foreign funds and the fear of rising crude prices affected investor sentiment in India. The rupee weakened, closing at 92.66/$ as against 92.58 on Wednesday. Gold in Mumbai's spot market closed at Rs 1.5 lakh/10 gram, down by Rs 600 from its previous close.

PEACE DEAL ON SHAKY GROUND, MKTS REACT

India well placed to tackle global energy shocks: WB

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India is well placed to weather the current global energy shocks as risks are "cushioned by ample buffers" including high forex reserves, fiscal space and a well-capitalised banking system, World Bank said Thursday, while projecting average growth of 7.1% during FY28-FY29. The assessment comes a day after the multilateral lender raised its FY27 growth forecast for the country to 6.6% from 6.3%.

"This is testimony to the fact that buffers that India had at the time of crisis were very strong and the authorities have struck a right balance between taking measures to manage supply without doing massive rationing. Risks are obviously massive (but) they are tilted to the downside," said Aurelien Kruse, World Bank's lead economist for India.

The agency was also optimistic about recent trade agreements with the EU and the UK, arguing that they can provide a sustained boost to exports, reduce prices, and support household incomes across income groups.

"These trade agreements are expected to significantly expand market access, potentially increasing the share of global GDP accessible through preferential trade from below 20% to nearly 38%," said South Asia chief economist Franziska Ohnsorge.

Commenting on the industrial policy of South Asia, the World Bank said that countries have been using them for the past decade to create more and better jobs, especially in the manufacturing sector, however, the track record has been mixed.

"Inward restricting policies have restricted imports significantly over several years, but export promoting policies have not significantly promoted exports," said Ohnsorge.

At an event organised by NCAER, she said that it's becoming "harder" for the countries in the region to create more and better jobs, while pointing out that around 28 crore young people will join the workforce in the next 10-15 years.

Sensex may hit 95k pts by Dec: Morgan Stanley report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Sensex could hit 95,000 points by Dec according to a Morgan Stanley report. They are banking on a handful of tailwinds, which they believe, are set to support a strong bull rally in Indian stocks. The sensex target level has a 50% chance while there's a 20% probability that it could run past the one-lakh point mark to about 1.1 lakh points. On the other side, in a bear case scenario, the sensex could end the year at around the current level of 76K points.

The base case scenario of 95k for the sensex are backed by expectations of sustained macroeconomic stability, a revival in private investment, and a favourable growth-inflation dynamic. The projection by Morgan Stanley analysts Ridham Desai and Nayant Parekh also assumes continued strength in domestic demand, steady global growth and benign crude oil prices, all of which are expected to support corporate earnings and market valuations.

At 95k mark, the sensex would be up 24% from Thursday's level. A key driver of the target is the anticipated earnings upcycle, with sensex earnings forecast to compound at 17% annually through FY28, the report said. This earnings momentum, combined with a supportive liquidity environment and strong retail participation, is expected to keep equity supply-demand dynamics favourable, it said.

Need to strengthen supply chains: Ficci

New Delhi: Indian companies should secure additional funding and strengthen supply chains, while govt should consider emergency financing for MSMEs and tax reforms to mitigate impact of the ongoing West Asia conflict, according to a Ficci report released Thursday. "The ongoing disruption in West Asia carries far-reaching implications for import-dependent economies, such as India, with likely impact on inflation, growth, balance of payments and fiscal health," the report said. TNN

TCS optimistic despite 2.4% decline in revenue

Operating Margin At 4-Yr High | Headcount Falls 23.4K In FY26 | AI-Led Impetus Strong

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: TCS remains optimistic about growth despite a muted FY26 performance, citing strong AI-led momentum and a steady deal pipeline. The company reported a 2.4% decline in constant-currency revenue —which excludes the impact of exchange rate fluctuations — while in dollar terms revenue fell 0.5% to $30 billion.

However, operating margin rose 70 basis points to 25%, a four-year high, even as the company continued to invest in growth initiatives. In the March quarter, revenue stood at $7.6 billion, up 1.5% sequentially and 2.1% year-on-year. In constant currency terms, revenue grew 1.2% quarter-on-quarter but declined 0.6% year-on-year. Operating margin edged up to 25.3%, a 10-basis-point increase, aided by favourable currency movements.

TCS CEO K Krithivasan said, "We do not see margins and growth as conflicting priorities — we believe we can deliver both. The strength of our margins enables us to continue investing in future growth areas, such as initiatives like Hypervault." Last year, TCS secured $1 billion from private equity firm TPG to advance its AI data centre strategy in India, aligning with its ambition to scale its AI infrastructure play. OpenAI is set to become the first customer of TCS' Hypervault data centre business, starting with 100 MW capacity and scaling to 1 GW over time.

Krithivasan said TCS is seeing strong momentum in its Hypervault business, which is progressing towards building 1 GW of capacity, backed by customer commitments, land finalisation and partnerships. The company is working with hyperscalers, semiconductor firms and model providers, positioning itself as an integration partner across infrastructure, engineering and AI services.

The company reported its third consecutive quarter of sequential growth, with constant-currency revenue rising 1.2% despite a challenging macro and geopolitical environment. This momentum, Krithivasan said, was broad-based across major markets, with North America growing 1.4% sequentially, the UK 2.4% and Europe 1% on a constant-currency basis. Most industry segments also recorded growth. Order book performance remained strong in the March quarter, with $12 billion in total contract value, including three mega deals across telecom and healthcare.

COO Aarthi Subramanian said FY26 was a pivotal year for enterprise AI adoption. "For the first time since the emergence of GenAI, we are seeing a clear shift from experimentation to scaled deployment. AI is now central to client conversations and solutioning. In Q4, our annualised AI revenue crossed $2.3 billion, driven by strong demand across transformation, engineering and cloud modernisation," she said. She added that TCS has developed an AI acceleration playbook, enabling deployment cycles of 12-16 weeks to solve high-value problems. The company also expanded partnerships during the quarter, including with OpenAI, AMD, ServiceNow, Google Cloud and ABB, to industrialise AI solutions and strengthen go-to-market capabilities.

TCS's headcount declined by 23,460 in FY26 to 5,84,519 employees, while it increased by 2,356 in the March quarter. Its wage bill rose by Rs 10,000 crore in FY26 despite fewer hires.

Chief human resource officer (CHRO) Sudeep Kunnumal said the company has announced annual salary increments effective April 1, with top performers receiving double-digit increases. This marks the second hike in eight months, after TCS earlier rolled out salary increases of 4.5% to 7% for most employees in Sept, with around 48,000 top performers receiving double-digit hikes. The TCS board approved a final dividend of Rs 31 per share.

SOFT GROWTH, STRONG PIPELINE

Financial year 2025-26 snapshot

- Dollar revenue stood at **$30 billion**, marking a 0.5% decline
- Revenue declined **2.4%** year-on-year in CC
- Operating margin expanded by 70 basis points to **25%**
- Total contract value (TCV) was **$40.7 billion**
- Headcount decreased by **23,460** to **584,519**

March quarter snapshot

- Dollar revenue stood at **$7.6 billion**, up 1.5% QoQ and 2.1% YoY
- Revenue rose **1.2%** QoQ in CC; declined **0.6%** YoY in CC
- Operating margin expanded to **25.3%** from **25.2%**, up 10 basis points
- TCV was **$12 billion**
- Headcount increased by **2,356**

Note: CC refers to constant currency

"We delivered strong sequential growth of 1.2% in constant currency, despite intensifying geopolitical conflicts and macroeconomic uncertainty. Momentum in our AI-led services continues to accelerate, reaching $2.3 billion on an annualised basis"
K Krithivasan | CEO, TCS

Payment lags can help curb digital fraud: RBI

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Some friction, long viewed as a flaw in digital payments, is now being seen as a feature. An RBI discussion paper proposes to introduce a short delay, or "lag", for high-value transfers above Rs 10,000. This gives customers time to rethink a transaction and cancel it if they suspect fraud. Customers may also be allowed to whitelist trusted payees so that genuine payments are not delayed.

Another proposal is to provide stronger protection to vulnerable users such as senior citizens by requiring an additional confirmation from a "trusted person" for large transactions above Rs 50,000. The paper also suggests a "kill switch" to instantly block all digital transactions in case of suspected fraud.

Digital Speed Breakers

- 1-hr lag on ₹10k+ transfers; allow cancellation during wait period, whitelist to bypass
- Trusted-person nod for ₹50k+ payments for seniors/PwD
- Cap on inflows in low-KYC accounts; excess becomes shadow credit
- Kill switch to freeze all digital payments on suspicion
- Banks may reconfirm suspicious transactions prior to their execution

Banks are expected to identify suspicious transactions in real time and seek reconfirmation from customers before processing them. They will need to build systems to implement delays, allow cancellations, and generate risk alerts. Banks are also expected to tighten due diligence by linking the level of activity in an account to the customer's profile. For instance, accounts with low verified income may face limits on how much money they can receive unless additional checks are completed.

A key finding is that most frauds now are the result of human vulnerability. The growth of digital payments has amplified this risk.

India, US to hold trade talks after two months

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: After a gap of nearly two months, India and the US will hold talks on trade issues, with a team led by chief negotiator due to visit Washington soon.

While dates are being finalised, US ambassador to India Sergio Gor said: "The US and India have previously agreed to a trade deal, and we look forward to welcoming an Indian delegation to Washington later this month." Gor's social media post came after a meeting with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on Thursday. On Feb 2, India and the US had announced a bilateral trade deal, with Washington imposing 18% reciprocal tariffs, but the pact was put on hold after the US Supreme Court termed the tariffs illegal. Since then, all US imports have been attracting 10% additional duty for 150 days.

The meeting is likely to take stock of the situation, given that the Trump administration is yet to unveil its future strategy. It has ordered a section 301 probe on several countries, including India as it works out the plan. India has maintained that it will seek a deal that ensures comparative advantage compared to others in the region.

Gor's statement on the meeting comes a day after foreign secretary Vikram Misri launched the India-US Trade Facilitation Portal as the two countries seek to enhance bilateral trade to $500 billion.

'Growth credit rises to $1.7bn as venture debt holds steady in 2025'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Growth credit is emerging as a key funding layer for Indian startups, with companies raising about $1.7 billion across 32 deals in 2025. This comes even as venture debt deployment remained largely steady during the year, according to a report by Stride Ventures.

Venture debt deployment stood at $1.3 billion in 2025, up slightly from about $1.2 billion in 2024. Deal activity remained broadly stable, indicating continued adoption among growth-stage startups.

The report noted that private debt is increasingly being used beyond traditional purposes such as working capital and runway extension. Startups are now leveraging it for platform expansion, acquisitions, and capital structure optimisation as they scale.

Stage-wise, venture debt activity remained concentrated in Series A and B rounds, which accounted for around 60% of total deals and 51% of deployed capital. At later stages, capital concentration rises significantly, with Series D and beyond contributing about 32% of total value despite representing only 12% of deal count.

REPORT

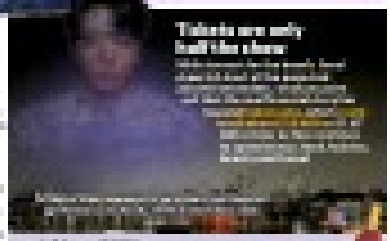
Geographically, Delhi NCR led venture debt deployment with $617 million across 64 deals, followed by Bengaluru at $333 million and Mumbai at $115 million. Together, Delhi NCR and Bengaluru accounted for the majority of venture debt capital deployed.

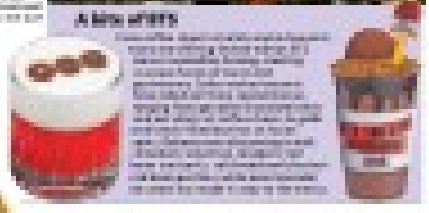
On the sector front, fintech accounted for the largest share of venture debt deployment at approximately $600 million. Consumer startups recorded the highest number of deals at 60, making up about 32% of total transactions. Other sectors such as cleantech ($108 million), logistics, and healthcare also saw notable activity.

The report added that venture debt continues to be widely used for tactical financing needs, including working capital and growth support—particularly among consumer-facing businesses. In contrast, growth credit is increasingly being deployed through larger, more structured facilities aimed at late-stage companies with stronger revenue visibility. Growth credit deployment remained concentrated across sectors, led by fintech.

Worth, tourism & BTS boom

BTS' $5.3bn comeback





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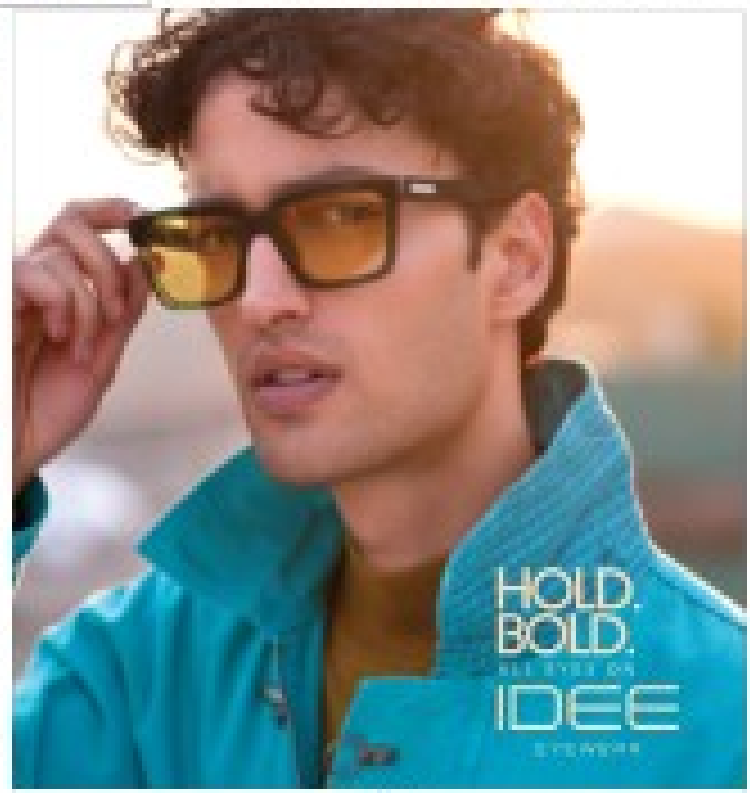
UP TO DATE

WHAT'S #TRENDING AND WHY



CONTRAPUNTO

A physicist is just an atom's way of looking at itself

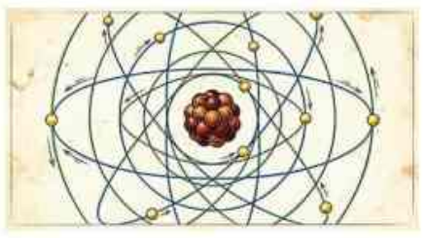
– NIELS BOHR

Atomnirbhar Bharat

Fast breeder reactor at Kalpakkam is a tech milestone. Next step: learn to use abundant thorium deposits

India joined a high-tech club of two this week. It is now the only other country, besides Russia, to have an operational fast breeder reactor (FBR) – a nuclear reactor that makes more fuel than it consumes. Best part is, the prototype FBR at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, has been designed and built indigenously. FBRs have been part of India's nuclear energy plans for decades. They are crucial because India has little uranium of its own to fuel conventional nuclear plants. What it does have is roughly a quarter of world's thorium, which can potentially be turned into nuclear fuel in FBRs. We aren't there yet, but it's a leap we need to make, for energy security. By some estimates, India's thorium reserves can generate 500GW electricity – twice the peak power demand of 2024-25 – every year, for the next 400 years.

As world's fastest growing major economy, India will need a lot more energy than it generates now. For a rough idea, China's peak demand last July was six times India's. That's why we need every energy type – coal, gas, solar, wind, nuclear – in the mix. Although nuclear plants produce hazardous waste, they have a negligible carbon footprint. And by using waste from conventional nuclear plants as fuel, FBRs make nuclear energy even cleaner. India's goal of increasing nuclear power capacity, from 9GW in 2025 to 100GW by 2047, shows will. And last year's Shanti Act, which makes the nuclear power sector attractive to private firms, leaves no doubt about intent.



Other nations are also scaling up nuclear energy plans. Over 60 new reactors are under construction around the world. Where net nuclear capacity shrank last decade, it has expanded in the 2020s, and will continue doing so through the 2030s. Amid this boom, attacks on Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant, and before that on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia plant, raise concerns about safety. Although nuclear plants have many built-in safeguards against accidents, they can't withstand deliberate ballistic strikes. And 40 years ago, Chernobyl showed that a damaged nuclear plant, is as bad as a bomb. Even now, a 30km zone around the damaged plant remains uninhabitable. So, while we go about adding nuclear capacity, we must demand strict enforcement of the old red lines of nuclear safety.

Get Logical

Some in India are chafing at Pakistan's mediator role in Iran war. They should think a bit more

It's a ceasefire where combatant parties aren't ceasing to fire – and it may get worse. Hormuz is more shut than open. Whether the US-Iran meet in Islamabad will happen is not certain. Nonetheless, Pakistan's role as a go-between will remain a fact. Washington and Tehran talked through Islamabad, and gave it credit. Any rational nation-state, especially a very large oil importer, should welcome all efforts at arranging a ceasefire, as indeed GOI did on Wednesday. But there appears to be some consternation in India about Pakistan's mediation, and not just among social media's shouting brigades. That's puzzling. Why should Pakistan's role diminish India's sense of itself? As a large energy importer, and a fast-growing economy, any attempts to stop the war are good for India. Those who claim to speak for its core self-interest, should know this: nothing's more important than free-flowing, cheaper hydrocarbons.

Also, look at history. Pakistan, despite its many problems, is no stranger to mediating between big actors. Kissinger, with Pakistani official support, had feigned illness on a visit to Pakistan, and made a secret trip to China, paving the way for the Nixon-Mao meet in 1972. Pakistan's military-political complex also has a track record of engaging with major powers, even if they are from opposite ends of the geopolitical spectrum. These are skills born out of necessity – Pakistan *has* to make itself useful to big boys, or it risks losing their indulgence. That outcome, increasingly, it can't afford. Plus, both Washington and Tehran needed a malleable player to act as a messenger.

Pakistan has been ingratiating itself to Trump for a year. Both Munir and Sharif have flattered him. But that's not a game India plays. It withstood 50% Trump tariffs, never entirely stopped buying Russian oil, and got to a point where a US trade deal is back on the table. That's because India, these days, comes in higher in the global batting order, and it can try and build an innings. Diplomacy is a Test match, not throw-your-bat-around T20.

NEAT way to keep fit

You don't have to go gymming, or jogging, to stay in shape

Jug Suraiya

Unlike me, Bunny has always been a neat person, in all senses of the term. She not only has neat habits, such as tidiness, and keeping things in proper order and shipshape, but is also neat in the idiomatic meaning of being smart, and elegant, and efficient.

Being a prime example of unneatness, I'm forever losing or misplacing things – mobile phone, reading glasses, my wallet – and Bunny unearths the elusive object from under the jumble of clothes in the laundry, where by some mysterious force of telekinesis it found its way, with perhaps some help from me.

Now Bunny is progressing from being neat to NEAT. NEAT stands for Non Exercise Activity Thermogenesis, and is a neat way of keeping fit without gymming, or jogging, or Pilates, or Zumba dancing, which can be expensive, time-consuming, boring, sweaty, or all of the above.

In 1918, the US military devised a calisthenic routine, which was popularised as the 'daily dozen', and involved simple, freehand movements, such as stretching, and bending every morning, to keep fit and active.

jugular*vein*

NEAT is a non-athletic avatar of the daily dozen, and consists of doing one's everyday household chores, and performing other physical tasks, which generate body heat, that in turn burns calories through thermogenesis.

Instead of leaving it to domestic help, or others to do things for you, like making your bed in the morning (187-200 calories depending on bed size and your size; the bigger you are, the more calories you'll burn), or making your own meals (100-150 calories depending on menu and the prep time involved), or making your way to where you're going by walking, or riding a cycle, instead of using motorised transport (250-??? calories depending on distance).

Sweeping, and moping, the floor? (100-120 calories depending on the area covered). Vacuuming? (99-160 calories per 30 minutes). Ironing clothes? (100-150 calories). Gardening? (135-250+ calories). Playing with children, or walking your dog? (250-350+ calories, depending on how energetic the children or dogs are).

I have just one problem with all this make-work NEATtness. To do it, I'd have to tackle the most difficult make-work of all: making up my mind to do it.

WHY DIDI KEEPS WALKING

Even after three terms as CM, Mamata's core politics hasn't changed: indefatigable, street-fighting, 'subaltern' leader, who has a keen sense of political theatre. It's also her biggest strength as she faces the toughest challenge of her political career

Sayantan Ghosh

Mamata Banerjee takes brief rests, eats light, and takes her medicines per schedule. Recently, during a pause, after back-to-back election rallies, her team was planning for a roadshow in Berhampore, a crucial assembly seat, with a significant Muslim population. Crucial also because Congress heavyweight Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury is contesting from here.

Chowdhury is a five-time MP from this constituency, 'Baharampur' (1999-2024), who lost 2024 Lok Sabha elections to TMC's Yusuf Pathan. He's now gunning for the assembly seat here. Given the scorching Bengal summer, CM's team suggested a truck for the roadshow. Banerjee immediately rejected it: *"Ami hantbo"* (I will walk). She ended up walking over 15km, despite chronic back pain that often requires her to wear support belts.

Banerjee remains indomitable on the streets. Former cabinet minister, late Subrata Mukherjee, and a close colleague of Didi from their student politics days in Congress, once remarked that if you let Mamata hit the streets, none can defeat her. Today, as she fights one of her toughest battles, insiders believe the contest is even harder than her 2011 victory, which ended Left's 34-year tenure.

The administrator | When Banerjee took office in 2011, many viewed her primarily as an opposition firebrand. Although a four-time central cabinet minister, she was known for confrontations with party leadership, frequent resignations, often seen as unpredictable.

In governance, however, she revealed a different side – a planned and structured administrator. She brought in economist Amit Mitra, former FICCI secretary-general, fielded him in elections, and appointed him FM.

Mitra, a liberal economist influenced by Amartya Sen's school of thought, helped shape key welfare schemes. These included Kanyashree (for girls' education), Rupashree (for marriage assistance), Sabuj Sathi (bicycle distribution for students), Lakshmir Bhandar (monthly financial aid to women), and Swasthya Sathi (health insurance cards for free hospital benefits).

Uday Deb

Most schemes targeted women, who became one of her strongest and most reliable support bases. Under her, Bengal shifted from Left era's stagnation, to focused populist welfare. Implementation gaps and fiscal strain, which accumulated over time, came in for criticism.

POLLS 2026
Bengal, TN, Assam, Kerala

Bengal's daughter | Bengal's Left Front brass were mostly upper-class, upper-caste 'bhadralok', spouting English, in dhoti and 'panjabi', delivering speeches with communist jargon – think, former CMs Jyoti Basu and Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee.

This style sometimes felt burdensome for Bengal's largely rural population – many districts have over 70-80% rural populations (Census 2011). Banerjee emerged as a subaltern leader from a modest middle-class family, spoke the common people's language – using rhymes, jokes, fiery yet relatable dialect, connecting directly with rural masses.

Elites mocked her slips of tongue, her English, and Hindi, turning them into memes. Yet she never shed her image as an authentic, common Bengali woman in '*hawai choti*' (her signature blue and white flip-flops). TMC's slogan for 2021 assembly elections captured this: "*Bangla nijer meye ke chai*" (Bengal wants its own daughter). It positioned her as the true representative of Bengali sentiment, against perceived outsiders.

Master of narrative | With BJP's rise, Banerjee adapted, championing Bengali subnationalism. She branded BJP the 'outsider' or 'bohiragoto' force, repeatedly alleging it would impose vegetarianism on fish-eating Bengal. The narrative stuck. This time, state BJP notables have campaigned with fish, released videos of them eating non-vegetarian, to counter that perception.

When SIR gained momentum, Banerjee swiftly framed EC's "illegal immigrant" argument as an attack on Bengalis. She linked it to crackdowns on poor Bengali-speaking migrant labourers in BJP-governed states. Merging SIR concerns with broader grievances, she portrayed BJP as anti-Bengal.

She took to the streets, protested against EC, and became the first CM to argue her own case in Supreme Court. Her narrative positioned her as a 'saviour' of Bengali identity and of 'genuine voters', regardless of community.

Fight till the end | SIR's new voter roll has 91L fewer names than Bengal's electoral rolls from last Oct. After nearly 15 years in govt, Banerjee faces strong anti-incumbency. Allegations of corruption plague TMC, with several top guns facing probes and prison – there's the SSC teachers' recruitment scam, ration distribution scam, and coal smuggling cases. The RG Kar medical college incident, and its aftermath, highlighted law & order concerns.

Names excluded from the new voter rolls have affected poorer sections, women, and Muslim community, all key TMC vote banks, raising worries within the party. This time, Banerjee's targets extend beyond BJP, to include EC and central agencies. But, she has never shied from fights.

No single Bengal opposition face matches her credibility, street-fighting ability, or understanding of the public pulse. State BJP often appears faceless, relying heavily on Modi's charisma, and Shah's strategy. Modi remains popular, but faces language and cultural hurdles. Banerjee, meanwhile, campaigns relentlessly, 2-3 rallies daily, walking long miles, simultaneously holding dharnas against Centre, on issues from SIR to LPG price hikes.

When she stormed an ED raid at IPAC's Kolkata office – that's working on TMC's election strategy – and allegedly seized documents, it drew national condemnation from several quarters. But those familiar with her politics recognise the pattern: love her or hate her, Didi cannot be ignored. She embodies the street fighter who knows defeat is possible, surrender is not.

Her walk in Berhampore isn't just about endurance – she thrives when in direct contact with people. Whether her blend of administration, subaltern appeal, and narrative mastery overcomes anti-incumbency and voter list revisions, remains uncertain. What's clear is her refusal to yield. As Bengal votes, 'daughter of Bengal' fights on her terms: on the streets, among the people, till the very end.

Ghosh is the author of Battleground Bengal

'As Long As Hezbollah Belongs To Iran, Our Future Isn't Ours'

A Lebanese journalist writes about how this militant group has jeopardised Lebanese identity – and why he would welcome US-Israel cutting Tehran's influence in his country

Khaled Zein Eddine

Columnist based in Beirut

The Iranian-Israeli-American truce doesn't apply to Lebanon. First Israel, then US, have both made this clear. Massive Israeli attacks on Lebanese soil are very much continuing. Wednesday, for example, saw multiple strikes, resulting in over 250 fatalities.

Basically, we are facing Gaza-like scenes of destruction in Lebanon, with bombs devastating homes and infra. And what we know is that Israel will not stop this war against us, until it achieves all its objectives, deep within Lebanon.

These objectives include, foremost, disarming Hezbollah, which has been created and funded by Iran. By pushing tensions between Hezbollah's base and other Lebanese factions, Israel seeks to create an environment where it is Hezbollah that's held responsible, for the destruction of Lebanon.

Stability in Lebanon, therefore, hinges on the extent to which Hezbollah complies with Lebanese govt decisions, surrenders its weapons, and returns to the fold of the state. But if Hezbollah remains defiant against Lebanese sovereignty, and people, it will jeopardise the future of Lebanese identity.

All this is happening in the context of a war that commentators say will be the last in West Asia, in the sense that it will completely transform the face of the region. In this envisioned new scenario, hostility towards Israel will be forbidden, and peace with Tel Aviv will expand. Israel, too, will seek to impose control over the region, resembling something of a Pax Judea.

Iran, in this vision of things, is at a disadvantage. Because of the huge difference in capabilities between Washington-Tel Aviv and Tehran. True, Iran has inflicted damage on Gulf Arab states, and held Hormuz Strait hostage. But this strategy can't last.

The world is changing. It is likely that the new emerging order will be a US-China-Russia triumvirate, with West Asia operating under an American mandate for Israel. As for Palestine, it is likely to be subsumed within a Greater Israel, which will ally itself with other powers centres.

It is against the backdrop of such ideas that Israel decided, to make Lebanon another front in the Iran war. This wasn't even surprising, given Hezbollah's presence. But what I am underlining is that this war can destroy Lebanon, as we know it. With Israel launching a massive ground operation here, we are looking at potential long-term occupation of Lebanese territory, up to the Litani River.

In taking on this challenge, Lebanon is weakened by rampant inflation and corruption. Graft is spread across ministries, govt departments, courts. All this is tremendously worsened by the very power-sharing arrangements that ended the 15-year-long Lebanese Civil War, especially the 1989 Taif Agreement. These arrangements have entrenched sectarian divisions, which in turn has hollowed the state and its institutions. They have meant that Hezbollah transitioned into a political party, while remaining a militia.

Hezbollah serves Iran. Today, we face an open war with Israel, because of Hezbollah. Let me say it in so many words: Lebanon is paying the price for Hezbollah's alignment with the Iranian axis.

Israel will not back down from its efforts to control Lebanese territories, in order to disarm Hezbollah, prevent it from rebuilding its capabilities, and stop it from threatening Israel's security. This also means disconnecting the Hezbollah-Iran supply lines. Note how Israel has already facilitated regime change in Syria, which served as Iran's lifeline for funding, weapons, and mobilisation.

Lebanon's unenviable position worsened after the Oct 7 Hamas attack on Israel. Beirut has, of course, tried to prevent the slide into chaos. Difficulty is that Hezbollah is rebelling against the Lebanese state itself. It is Hezbollah that is making all the decisions regarding war and peace, but it is Lebanese people who are paying the price.

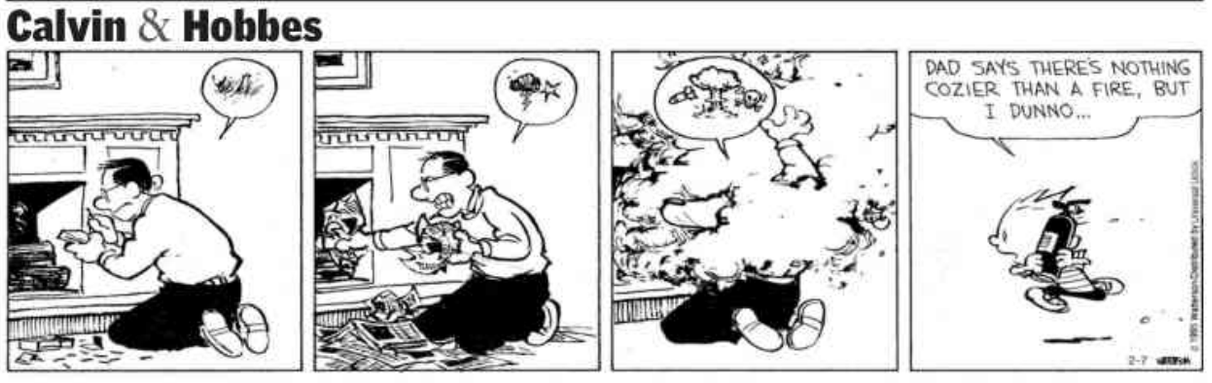
Lebanese fatalities in this war are around the same as those in Iran – around 1,700. Iran, however, has a population of 90mn, Lebanon of just 5mn.

Lebanon's future is in danger, as long as Hezbollah exists. It cannot both sit in Lebanese parliament, and carry out armed activities on Lebanese soil. It should, ideally, stop the latter, and function only as a political party, while also ceasing money laundering, street mobilisation, and Iranian propaganda. As long as Hezbollah doesn't 'belong' to Lebanon, the price will be paid by Lebanon.

Actually, the whole region would benefit from this war delivering a weakened Iran. Because the Islamic Republic hasn't spread the banner of so-called resistance in just Lebanon. It has done the same in Iraq, Yemen, Syria. What it's really been spreading is hatred and extremism.

But today, after its project was thwarted in Syria, and is now being thwarted in Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq, Iran is finally paying a heavy price. The negotiations due in Islamabad between US and Iran must aim to dilute Iran's influence in the region. If Lebanon's plight says anything, it underlines the destructiveness of Islamic Republic's designs.

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacred*space*

Racists violate the principle of equality by giving greater weight to the interests of members of their own race... Similarly, speciesists allow the interests of their own species to override the greater interests of members of other species.

Peter Singer

Cats And Dogs: Stories Of Faith, Hope, And Peace

Kulbir Kaur

In Mahabharat, Yudhishthir refused to enter heaven without his dog. When Indra tried to convince Yudhishthir to ascend alone, he replied that abandoning a loyal companion, a stray dog, whose only concern is Yudhishthir's protection, would be a great sin. The dog eventually revealed himself to be Dharm, the path of righteousness.

Why is 'dharm' personified as a dog in the epic? Why does Bhairv, a fierce yet protective form of Shiv, have 'dog' as his vahan, vehicle? The dog represents unwavering loyalty, companionship, vigilance, and guardianship – qualities we are beginning to forget.

Who knows the meaning of 'unconditional love' more than our furry friends? Animals, time and again, have reminded us of what it means to be human. Are animals our only mediums of faith, hope, and peace? Faith, the deformed dog that walked on two legs, unsinkable Sam, the cat who survived war, and Aloka, the dog who walked for peace, tell us why animals matter and what we can learn from them.

Faith, a bipedal dog, was born with three legs, and the front deformed leg was amputated when she was seven months old. Her owner, Jude, using a spoon with peanut butter as an incentive, taught Faith to hop. She learnt to walk upright on two legs, and soon became a symbol of courage, inspiring many to *not* give up.

Faith helped many soldiers and children recover. Frankie, a young soldier who had lost both legs while serving in the war, was feeling lost and depressed till he met Faith. She, with her upright, proud posture, entered the room, and that moment changed everything. Frankie decided to give himself another chance, continued with his treatment, received artificial limbs, and fully recovered. He always remembered Faith and reminded himself, 'If a dog can do it, i can do it too.'

THE SPEAKING TREE

Faith visited more than 2,300 wounded soldiers, and because of her work, she was given an honorary rank of Sergeant. As a therapy dog, she became a symbol of overcoming disabilities, sending people the message, 'you are going to be fine.'

Sam, the 'unsinkable cat', taught us the true meaning of 'resilience'. Sam was a black-and-white cat who survived the sinking of three warships in 1941. He was always found clinging to a floating plank. Rescued each time from the sea, Sam became a living legend and a reminder to human beings that life persists even in the darkest chapters of history.

Aloka, the stray Indian dog with a distinctive heart-shaped marking on his forehead, emerged as a ray of hope for peace. Aloka, meaning 'enlightenment', chose to join a group of Buddhist monks in their mission to 'Walk for Peace'.

Animals do not ask for medals or material things. They send a powerful message: animals are not disposable. They have shaped our values and kept us emotionally sane. Like Faith, many dogs and other animals survived injuries and disabilities on the streets. Like Sam, they endured the environment shaped by human conflicts. Like Aloka, they formed bonds of love and harmony.

Animals and other species rely on us. We must be the voice of voiceless, and remember that the measure of society lies not in how it treats the powerful but how it treats the weak and voiceless.

SNAP SHOTS

Hansika, Neha bag bronze

Hansika Lamba and Neha won a bronze medal each in the women's 55kg and 59kg class respectively while Meenakshi Goyat came back from the brink to beat South Korea's Seoyoung Park and reach the final of the 53kg category at the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Thursday. In the women's 55kg bronze medal bout, Hansika was cautious in the first round against Kyrgyzstan's Aruuke Kadyrbek Kyzy. The 19-year-old Indian then opened her account with a take down in the first minute of the second round with a leg attack. She then pressed for the advantage and won the bout 6-1. Neha then added the seventh medal to India's tally when she registered a dominating 10-4 win over Mongolia's Bolortuya Khurelkhuu in the women's 59kg.

Brazil's Laura createsT20I history: Brazil fast bowler Laura Cardoso entered her name in the record books, becoming the first player in either men's or women's T20I cricket to pick up nine wickets in a single innings. Cardoso delivered the sensational spell against Lesotho, finishing with extraordinary figures of 9/4 from her three overs, the best-ever bowling figures in T20I cricket, at the BCA Kalahari women's T20I tournament in Gaborone.

Sabalenka pulls out: Aryna Sabalenka has pulled out of this month's Stuttgart Open due to an injury she sustained following her Miami Open triumph in March, the world number one said on Thursday. The 27-year-old Sabalenka has had a notable but frustrating record in the Stuttgart Open, having reached the final four times in five years but never winning the title. The Stuttgart Open starts on April 13.

Rune set to return: Three-times Grand Slam quarterfinalist Holger Rune will return to action at next month's Hamburg Open after having Achilles surgery in October, tournament organisers said on Thursday. Rune suffered the season-ending Achilles tendon rupture in the Stockholm Open semifinals when he was up a set against Ugo Humbert. Days later, he returned to the top 10 in the world rankings despite losing out on a second title of the year.

Indians bag triple gold: Indian paddlers claimed three of the four team titles, the U-19 girls, U-15 boys and U-15 girls, at ITTF-ATTU Asian Youth Table Tennis Cham pionships in Shimla.

Veer, Baisoya share lead: Teen sensation Veer Ganapathy, who recently turned 18, nailed two birdies in the last three holes to card 5-under 67 and rise to top of the leaderboard in the first round of the AM Green IGPL Invitational 2026 Mauritius golf tournament in Port Louis, Mauritius. Sachin Baisoya, who was consistent throughout 2025 with multiple Top-3 finishes but no wins, produced a brilliant finish after a sedate start. He closed with three birdies in a bogey-free round of 67 to join Ganapathy for a share of the lead.

WC looms, but no takers for TV rights yet in India

FIFA Slashes Rates For Region But Time Difference With US & Economic Volatility Play Spoilsport

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Panaji: Ever since Doordarshan broadcast live the semifinals and final of the football World Cup in 1982 and Diego Maradona's famous exploits in full for the first time from Mexico '86, every four years fans in India have stayed up late into the night to watch the global sporting showpiece on TV.

This time, however, with little over two months to go for the 2026 World Cup in the USA, Mexico and Canada, the fate of the live telecast of the World Cup in this region hangs in the balance, with no confirmation yet of any broadcaster picking up the media rights for either this edition or the one in 2030.

Last month, FIFA confirmed media rights sales in key Asian markets for the World Cup with Japan (Dentsu), Korea Republic (JTBC), Hong Kong (PCCW), Indonesia (TVRI) and Singapore (Mediacorp) on the list. Football's governing body said it aimed to ensure that coverage of the tournament reaches the broadest possible audience through a range of platforms across the continent.

The absence of two of the world's most populous nations, India and China, among the 179 confirmed territories was hard to miss. FIFA updated the list last week on April 3. At the Qatar World Cup four years ago, China (1,161 million viewers) and India (745 million) were two of the biggest markets for FIFA.

This time, FIFA's media rights are still up for grabs. Industry sources says they are too expensive at $40 million (approx. 370 cr). "At the price that FIFA is offering the media rights (for the subcontinent), it does not make business sense," sources told **TOI**. "Only 10% of matches kick off at prime time in India. There is a lot of market uncertainty (due to the war in West Asia) and money has already been committed to cricket, India's most popular sport by some distance."

When FIFA reached out to potential partners in India last year, they were told that the rights would cost $100 million. A few months ago, that price was brought down to $65 million with companies asked to "match the fee from four years ago". There were still no takers, prompting FIFA to slash the rates further and now seek anywhere between $35-40 million (approx. Rs 325-370 cr).

According to experts, investing such a big sum does not make business sense because of the graveyard shift kick-off timings in India. Of the 104 matches, only 13 will kick off at prime time for TV audiences in India while the rest will start between 12 midnight and 9.30 am IST due to the time difference. "In 2022, when the Cup was played in Qatar, timings were perfect for India yet the broadcaster suffered losses. Currency volatility with the dollar makes the task even more difficult," he said.

Atletico storm Camp Nou

AFP

ON TARGET: Alvarez (left) celebrates with Griezmann after scoring against Barcelona

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Barcelona Hit After Bright Start; Flick Blasts Referee

Barcelona: Julian Alvarez and Alexander Sorloth's goals earned Atletico Madrid a commanding 2-0 lead over 10-man Barcelona in a tense Champions League quarter-final first leg clash on Wednesday.

The La Liga leaders were on top in the all-Spanish tie at Camp Nou before Pau Cubarsi was sent off for bringing down Atletico's Giuliano Simeone, who was through on goal.

Alvarez whipped home the resulting free-kick and Sorloth doubled their advantage with 20 minutes remaining to give Atletico a strong advantage.

Diego Simeone's side, who have never won the competition, reached the 2014 and 2016 finals. "We have things to improve and learn from... we're happy for the win but there's a long way to go," Atletico's Antoine Griezmann told Movistar.

Barca, semifinalists last season, need to make a huge comeback in Madrid. Barca coach Hansi Flick was upset by the use of VAR to punish his side for Cubarsi's red card but not to analyse a potential handball incident against Atletico's Marc Pubill in the second half.

"The VAR was very focused today for Atletico, he's a German guy, so thanks Germany," complained the former Germany boss. AFP

9 Julian Alvarez has scored nine CL goals this season, the most by an Atletico player in a single season, overtaking Diego Costa's eight goals in 2013-14.

5 Among Argentina internationals, only Lionel Messi (4 times) scored more CL knockout stage goals in a season than Alvarez's five in 2025-26.

PSG LEAVE REDS IN THEIR WAKE

Paris: Ousmane Dembele had an off night but Khvicha Kvaratskhelia added another solo goal to his collection as Paris Saint-Germain beat Liverpool 2-0 in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal on Wednesday.

The Georgia star cut in from the left flank midway through the second half and, with typically quick feet, skipped past a defender and the goalkeeper before stroking in his team-leading eighth goal of the competition. "We had chances to score more," Kvaratskhelia said. "But I think it's OK, 2-0 is good but we have to stay concentrated."

Desire Doue put the defending champions ahead in the 11th minute with a deflected effort. The Ballon d'Or winner Dembele then spurned three chances at Parc des Princes. Accepting his team was outplayed, Slot explained his decision to be so cautious. "They have pace from everywhere all over the pitch, no matter where you look," he said. "The times when we tried to play high and aggressive they ripped us apart."

When the two teams met last season in the round of 16, PSG advanced on penalties after losing 1-0 at home and winning 1-0 at Anfield.

The task seems less difficult this time around for PSG. "Of course you think you can do better, but we were in survival mode for large parts of the game, and maybe also we are in survival mode at this period of the season," said Liverpool manager Arne Slot, whose team have won just one of their last six matches. AFP

> **"It's a pity, it's very clear that we deserved more goals. It's the first time under Arne Slot that Liverpool have played with five defenders this season."**
> —**Luis Enrique** | PSG COACH

0 Liverpool failed to record a shot on target in an UCL match for the first time since Nov 2020 against Atalanta.

Ayush in quarters; Sindhu, Prannoy out

M.Ratnakar@timesofindia.com

Ayush Shetty was the lone Indian left at the Badminton Asia Championships as the rest, including PV Sindhu, suffered second-round losses in Ningbo, China on Thursday. World No. 25 Ayush eased past world No. 20 Chi Yu Jen of Chinese Taipei 21-16, 21-12. He is one win away from the medal round.

Sindhu faltered against Chinese second seed Wang Zhi Yi 18-21, 8-21. With Unnati Hooda's 17-21, 9-21 loss to Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan, India's challenge ended in women's singles. Returning after an injury layoff, Prannoy went down fighting to Weng Hong Yang of China 12-21, 19-21.

BADMINTON ASIA C'SHIPS

The mixed doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto lost to Malaysian fourth seeds Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei 13-21, 14-21. In women's doubles, Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra lost to the fifth-seeded Japanese duo of Yuki Fukushima and Mayu Matsumoto 10-21, 13-21.

After knocking out seventh seed Li Shi Feng on Wednesday, Ayush made short work Chi. Facing Ayush for the first time, Chi earned a 10-6 lead in the first game. The 20-year-old Indian won the next three points by playing a patient game. From 13-14, Ayush made it 17-14. Staying close to the net, Ayush waited patiently for his chances. Even when he was up 20-16, he played a 29-shot rally and forced Chen to make the mistake.

Ayush used the same tactics in the second game. Standing tall at the centre of the court, the lanky Indian dictated the pace with his good work at the net. At 4-6, Ayush came up with a six-point burst. With another three consecutive points from 13-9, he gained a substantial lead and closed out the match.

Ayush will face third seed Jonathan Christie of Indonesia in the quarterfinals.

MUNICH'S MARCH

Bayern Munich are about to break the all-time Bundesliga goals record for a season, a mark which has stood for 54 years. Bayern need just 1 more goal to tie and 2 more to break the mark with 6 games to go...

	Games	Goals
SerieA record — Torino | 1947-48	40	125
La Liga record — Real Madrid | 2011-12	38	121
		Cristiano Ronaldo scored 46 goals
EPL record — Man City | 2017-18	38	106
		Sergio Aguero scored 21 goals
Bundesliga record — 1971-72	34	101
		Team comprising Franz Beckenbauer and Gerd Müller propelled Bayern to a famous 11-1 demolition of Borussia Dortmund
Current Bayern	28 games played, 6 more to go	100

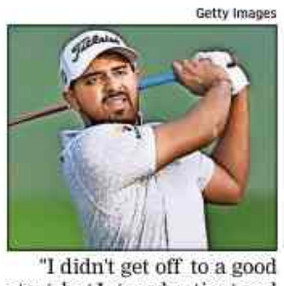
Top scorer Harry Kane with 31 goals

Avg goals 3.57/ game

Bayern play St Pauli at 10pm (IST) on Saturday

Gritty Joshi extends lead to three shots

Getty Images



Visakhapatnam: Khalin Joshi carded a one-under 70 to extend his lead to three shots at seven-under 206 after round three at the Rs 1 crore Andhra Open here on Thursday. The Bengaluru-based 33-year-old Khalin (68-68-70), a six-time winner, who opened the week with rounds of 68 and 68, now carries a comfortable advantage into the final round.

Dubai-based Yash Majmudar (71-69-69) and Delhi's Arjun Sharma (71-70-70), who has been one of the consistent performers. PTI

GOLF

Rashid Khan (70-72-67) were tied second at four-under 209. Majmudar returned a 69, while Rashid produced the day's best round of 67 to move into contention.

Joshi, currently 55th on the Order of Merit, is now in prime position to end a four-year winless run, with his last title coming in Coimbatore in Aug 2022. With a three-shot advantage, Joshi will look to hold his nerve in the final round as he targets his seventh professional title.

"I didn't get off to a good start, but I stayed patient and trusted my ball-striking. I'm driving it well and hitting my irons solid, so I just need to keep the putter going. I'm proud of the way I handled myself on the course despite the poor start and fought back on the back-nine," Joshi said. Rashid surged into contention with a strong penultimate round of 67 which included an eagle, five birdies and three bogeys.

Viraj Madappa (69-71-71), the youngest Indian winner on the Asian Tour and a winner on the PGTI last season, was tied fourth at two-under 211 alongside Greater Noi-

Reed & Burns hit the front

AFP

GOOD START: Patrick Reed

Augusta: Former LIV Golf player Patrick Reed used a pair of front-nine eagles to grab a share of the early on-course lead at the Masters on Thursday at Augusta National where defending champion Rory McIlroy reached the turn two shots back and world number one Scottie Scheffler was about to tee off.

AUGUSTA MASTERS

Reed took advantage of the par-fives as he converted a putt from the fringe at the par-five second hole to become the sixth player in Masters history to start off birdie-eagle in the first round. He added another eagle at the eighth where he rolled in a 56-foot putt.

The 2018 Masters champion, who left LIV Golf in January and plans to return to the PGA Tour later this season, was four under par through 11 holes and level with Sam Burns, who had five holes left in his round. Tommy Fleetwood, who was playing alongside Reed, matched the best first-nine score in his Masters career by reaching the turn in four-under 32, and was one shot off the pace with Masters debutant Kristoffer Reitan of Norway.

McIlroy began his round in cool and breezy conditions, offset a birdie with a bogey and scrambled for pars on multiple occasions, including at the par-four fifth where he produced a sublime approach shot from deep in the woods to reach the green in two. Reuters

Rivaldo steals the show

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Rivaldo scored two goals to power Rajarajeshwari Nagar past CV Raman Nagar 4-2 in the first quarterfinal of the Chief Minister's Cup at the Bengaluru Football Stadium here on Thursday.

Rivaldo's strike from 45 yards, catching the goalkeeper off guard in the 86th minute, was the highlight of the day's play.

Luke Anthony put RR Nagar 2-0 ahead in under 11 minutes, from where CVR Nagar found it difficult to make a comeback. Khaleel Rehman reduced the margin in the 39th minute, but they couldn't keep the momentum going.

In the second quarterfinal, Krishnarajapura defeated Hebbal 2-0 to enter the semifinals. After a goalless first half, Steve Mathews broke the deadlock for KR Pura in the 56th minute.

Results: Rajarajeshwari Nagar 4 (Luke Anthony 8, 11; Rivaldo JC 63, 86) bt CV Raman Nagar 2 (Khaleel Ur Rehman 39, Uttam Prashanth 99 + 5); Krishnarajapura 2 (Steve Mathews 56, Tejas 87) bt Hebbal 0.

Today's matches: Shanti Nagar vs Shivaji Nagar (2 pm); Sarvagna Nagar vs Rajajinagar (4 pm) — **Kaushal Kumar V**

Jamshedpur, Mumbai City share spoils

A dramatic late equaliser from substitute Sarthak Goloui cancelled out Brandon Fernandes' first-half strike as Jamshedpur FC held Mumbai City FC to a 1-1 draw in a top of the table ISL clash in at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshedpur on Thursday.

The result keeps Mumbai City at the top of the standings with 18 points, while Jamshedpur move to second with 15 points after a hard-fought contest at the Furnace.

ISL

The match began at a high tempo, with both sides showing attacking intent early on. Mumbai City had the first attempt in the fourth minute through right winger Vikram Partap Singh, while Jamshedpur responded with a series of forward moves led by left winger Mohammed Sanan, striker Raphael Messi Bouli, and Ritwik Kumar Das.

Results: Jamshedpur FC 1 (Sarthak Goloui 90) drew with Mumbai City FC 1 (Brandon Fernandes 45+2);

Today's match: FC Goa vs Odisha FC

Vanguards dominate

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Suhaavi starred with 21 points to help Bangalore Vanguards script a 59-40 win over Koramangala SC in the State women's basketball league championship at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium courts here on Thursday.

Prashitha chipped in with 12 points for the Vanguards, who took a 37-23 lead at the interval. Saloni top-scored with 28 points for Koramangala. In another match, Vimanapura SC registered a thumping 71-14 win against MNK Rao Park BC. Shreya top-scored with 26 points in a one-sided contest, where a dominant Vimanapura led 37-3 at the break.

Results: Bangalore Vanguards 59 (Suhaavi 21, Prashitha 12) bt Koramangala SC 40 (Saloni 28) HT: 37-23; Vimanapura SC 71 (Shreya 26) bt MNK Rao Park BC 14. HT: 37-3; YMMA 57 (Tanvi 14, Anjali 13) bt Pattabhiram BC 27 (Gauri 10) HT: 27-14; Vivek's SC 60 (Linisha 16) bt Devanga Union 9. HT: 37-5; Hoop 7 31(Sharanya 11) bt Bangalore Sporting 23 (Manasvi 9) HT: 19-18; MCHS 41 (Ananya 11) bt AVBC 28 (Chirantana 9) HT: 28-14; BCYA 55 (Sakshi 21) bt Vijayapura 42 (Lalitha 10) HT: 31-27.

STATE BASKETBALL

Jahanavi, Pragya does the 'trick

Bengaluru: Hat-tricks from Jahanavi Reddy and Pragya Vora helped Kemp Juniors FC wallop GRK Girls FC 13-0 in the KSFA Women's 'A' Division league championship at the Bangalore Football Stadium on Thursday.

Results: 'A' Div: Young Blues Elite FC 3 (Nilavoli Sethu Rayar 45, 58; Shravya Manoj 9) bt Reds United FC 0; Kemp Juniors FC 13 (Janhavi Reddy 6, 19, 34, 56; Pragya Vora 31, 35, 54; Mera 7, 45; Anika Joshi 27; Vaishnavi M 28; T Steffi 50; Nishka Chawla 55) bt GRK Girls FC 0.

'B' Div: Real Bengaluru FC 7 (Sparsha N Kumar 22, 30; Sindhu U Sharma 28, 31; Hindavi Sharma 6; Shraddha Rajak 45; Sreethara P 50) bt Prakrida FC 0; Kickstart FC 2 (Anisha Nadar 3, Derrin Treesa Sumesh 43) bt BLFA 0. **Today's matches:** 'A' Div: Technico FF vs Parikrma FC; SRFC vs Pass FC Sparks. TNN

Minakshi and Preeti win gold

Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia): Reigning world champion Minakshi Hooda and Preeti Pawar led the gold rush for India with two others also registering victories in the finals to be crowned Asian boxing champions here on Thursday. Joining Minakshi (48kg) and Asian Games bronze medallist Preeti (54kg) at the top of the podium were Priya Ghanghas (60kg) and World Boxing Cup gold medallist Arundhati Choudhary (70kg).

Minakshi set the tone by securing India's first gold of the day with a 5-0 win over Mongolia's Nomundari Enkh-Amgalan. PTI

Nat'l medals and Aadarsh's leap of faith

M.Sudharshan
@timesofindia.com

AGAINST ALL ODDS: Tamil Nadu high jumper Aadarsh Ram

Chennai: In the bustling Churchgate railway station, a 24-year-old Tamil Nadu high jumper was always on his toes as a ticket collector (TC), navigating the demands of a job in one of Mumbai's busiest stations. In the sea of faces, few knew that the uniform concealed an athlete chasing greater heights.

A few years on, that quiet pursuit is echoing on bigger stages. Aadarsh Ram clinched bronze in the Asian Indoor Championships with a 2.19m effort in Feb and has breached the Athletics Federation of India's qualification standards for both the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games.

ATHLETICS

He pushed his limits further by clearing a personal best of 2.23m to finish second in the recent Indian Open Series in Bengaluru. The first year with Railways tested his endurance as the 28-year-old struggled to balance duty and training, remaining stuck around the 2.12m mark.

With time slipping away, belief began to waver. Under Railways rules, only a medal at the Open Nationals would grant him a year of full-time training, making 2023 a decisive season. A podium finish would allow him to focus solely on athletics; failure meant continuing the grind. Despite a heel injury, Aadarsh secured bronze in a three-way tie at 2.10m — a turning point in his career.

"Had I not medalled at Open Nationals in 2023, my career would have been over. I was at a very low point. When people said I couldn't progress, I began doubting myself, but I guess luck was on my side as three of us ended with bronze medals," Aadarsh told TOI.

After joining Western Railways in May 2021, he struggled through long shifts and language barriers. The period from Sept 2021 to Sept 2022 was particularly tough as he tried to manage passengers, fines and limited Hindi while battling self-doubt. Unable to train during the pandemic and without a coach initially, Aadarsh approached national record holder Sahana Kumari in Bengaluru. Since beginning training under her in Jan 2023, his progress has been steady.

"Under Sahana ma'am, I have strengthened my basics. Our aim is not just to compete in CWG and Asiad but win medals. I believe I can cross 2.25m this season," he said.

Sinner, Alcaraz reach last eight

Reuters

SURMOUNT: Jannik Sinner

Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz both suffered second-set stumbles on Thursday in their race for the number one ranking but recovered to reach the last eight of the Monte Carlo Masters. Sinner, who said he ran out of steam in the second set, beat the wildly erratic Tomas Machac, 6-1, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3. Alcaraz followed Sinner on to the centre court and his match went to a similar pattern before he beat Tomas Etcheverry 6-1, 4-6, 6-3.

TENNIS

Alcaraz, the defending champion, could lose the No.1 ranking to Sinner, who was finishing a ban last year and has no ranking points to lose this week. The Italian came into Monaco after winning the Masters tournaments in Indian Wells and Miami.

On Thursday, Sinner galloped through the first set but slowed in the second, allowing Machac to hit his way back into the match. Machac squandered two set points on serve at 5-4 in the second but then romped through the tiebreak. That ended Sinner's record streak of 36 straight sets in 1000-level events but he stayed cool to stretch his run of Masters wins to 19.

Even with his opponent struggling, the Czech kept flailing for winners. He handed Sinner the third-set initiative when wild hitting handed the Italian a break to love in the third game. Sinner held serve twice before breaking to love to wrap up victory in two hours and one minute. His quarter-final opponent, sixth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime, needed to expend less energy. The Canadian was leading Casper Ruud 7-5, 2-2 when the Norwegian retired.

Alcaraz also blazed through the first set. But in the second he made 23 unforced errors. Alcaraz re-established control when he broke in a marathon second game in the final set but was struggling to put his first serves in play. The top seed saved a break point to go 5-2 up and then needed three match points to clinch victory in 2hr 23min in his next service game. The Spaniard will next face Alexander Bublik for the first time. Kazakh Bublik, who beat Jiri Lehecka 6-2, 7-5, is, like Alcaraz, known for his drop shot. AFP

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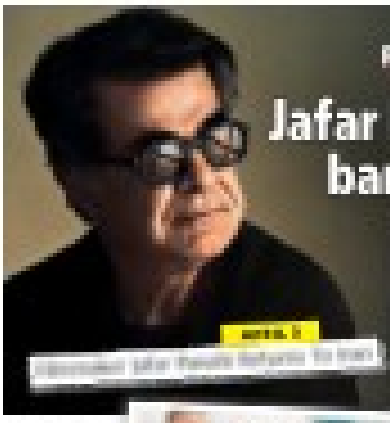
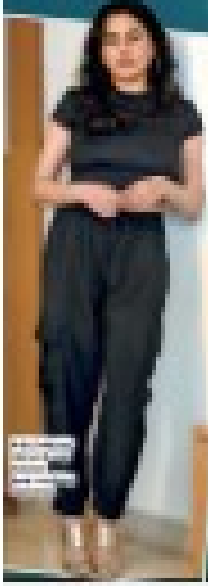
OSCAR-NOMINATED, PALME D'OR-WINNING

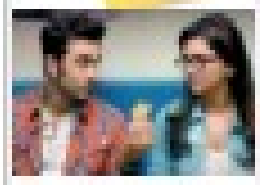
Jafar Panahi: Arrested, banned, still defiant

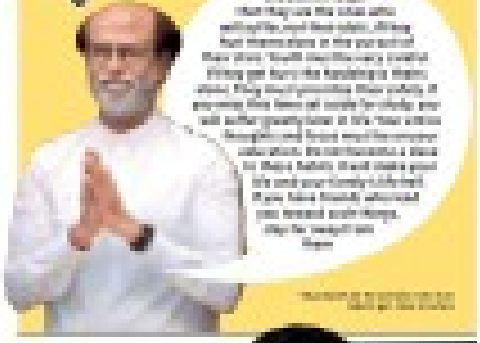


'My surname was the reason I got my first ever film'

'Deep-sea diving felt like entering another world'







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THE TIMES OF INDIA

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

INCLUDES 14 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND 8 PAGES OF TIMES PROPERTY* (*CITY AREAS ONLY)

The US has confirmed it is preparing to host an Indian delegation in Washington later this month, says a post by ambassador Sergio Gor, signalling fresh push in bilateral trade ties

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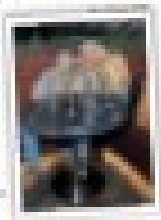

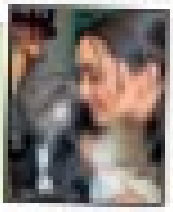

If someone tries to defame me, it's not right: Kumar Sanu

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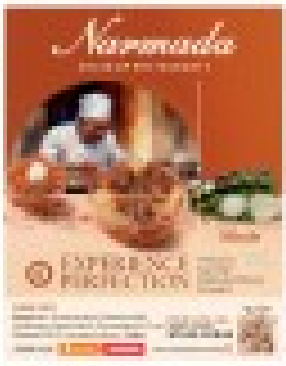

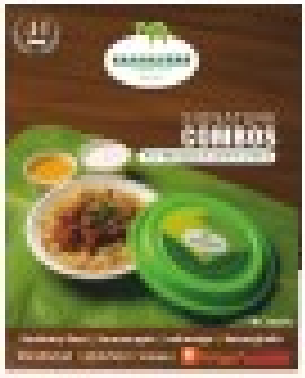

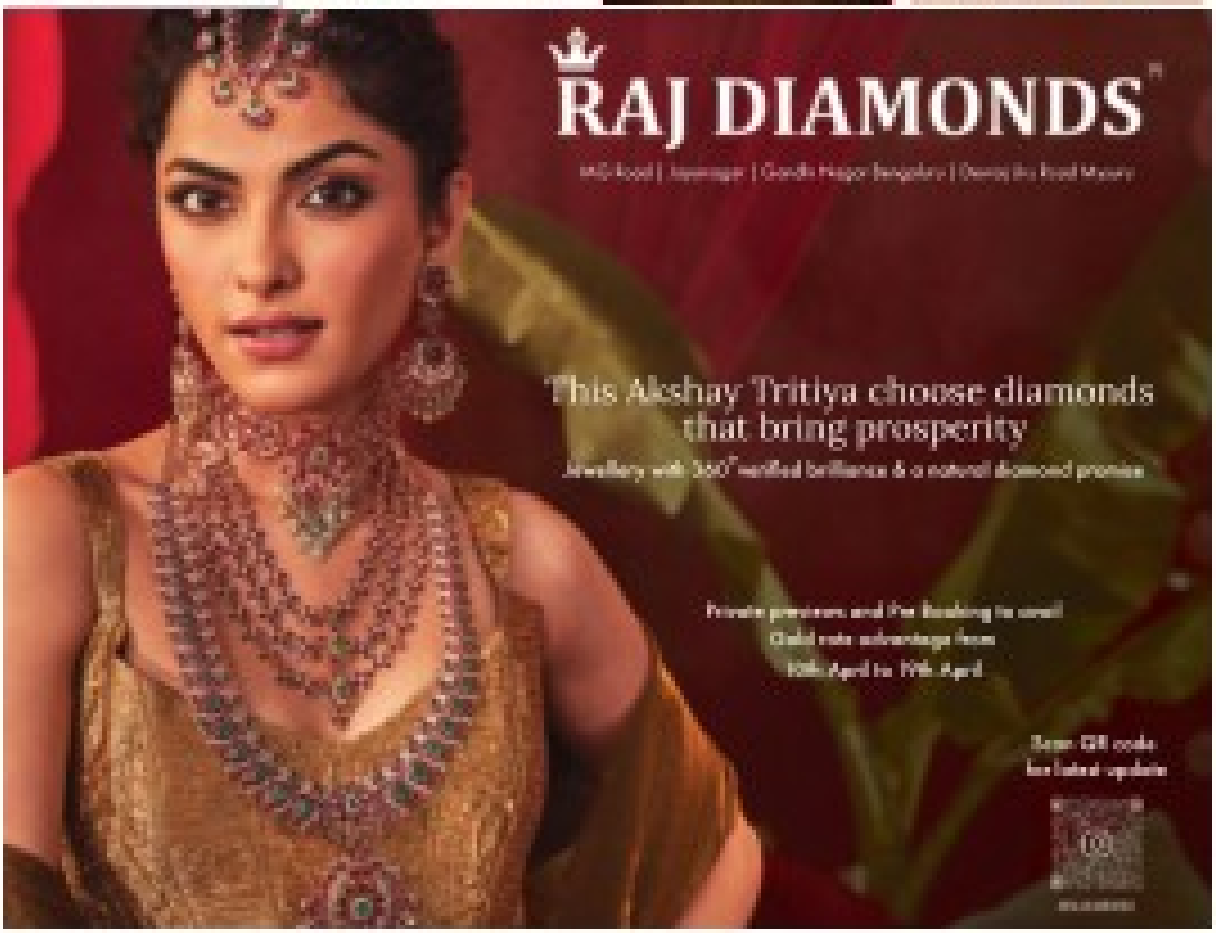
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"CHENNAI IS PROBABLY NOT THE EASIEST PLACE TO PLAY, ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE WHAT I CALL A 'JADEJA WICKET', A PITCH ON WHICH YOU CAN BOWL AT 100 KM AN HOUR AND THE BALL SPINS OR JUST HOLDS A LITTLE BIT. LUCKILY, JADEJA IS NOT THERE THIS SEASON."
—Heinrich Klaasen | SRH 'keeper-batter

MUKUL: A NEW HERO RISES

Young Batter's Late Blitz Takes LSG Past KKR In A Thriller

Archiman.Bhaduri@timesofindia.com

Pix: IANS, PTI

Mukul Choudhary (left) and Ayush Badoni (below) in action on Thursday

Kolkata: Not much was known about Mukul Choudhary in the cricketing circles before Thursday. The young wicketkeeper-batter from Rajasthan became the newest hero of this IPL as the Lucknow Super Giants' 21-year-old smacked seven sixes, the same number hit by the Kolkata Knight Riders in their whole innings earlier, and two fours to script an incredible three-wicket win at the Eden Gardens here on Thursday. Choudhary single-handedly turned the match on its head from a situation when KKR were almost home, staying undefeated on 54 off just 27 balls.

Needing 30 runs in the last two overs, Choudhary hit Cameron Green, bowling for the first time in this IPL, for 16 runs. He completed the victory with 14 runs in the last over bowled by impact sub Vaibhav Arora.

Chasing 182 runs for a win, LSG made the right start with Aiden Markram and Mitchell Marsh providing them a flying start. But Arora brought the hosts back in the match by dismissing both the batters in his second over as LSG reached 56 for two in their Powerplay.

Nicholas Pooran's poor run with the bat continued as the West Indian departed for 13. LSG lost Abdul Samad in the very next over.

LSG impact sub Ayush Badoni stood tall, playing some good shots to get to 50 off 33 balls. But once the youngster was caught by Rinku Singh off Anukul Roy, LSG lost the momentum till Choudhary decided to take things in his hands. Sunil Narine, back after missing the last game, kept the LSG batters quiet, giving away 13 runs in his four overs, picking up one wicket which was his 200th in T20 cricket.

Earlier, KKR too struggled to get going. Ajinkya Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi steadied the ship after they lost opener Finn Allen early.

Spinner Digvesh Rathi, returning for his second spell, broke the 84-run second-wicket stand between the two, scalping Rahane (41), who pulled a short one to mid-wicket where Shami stooped to take the catch. Raghuvanshi departed in the very next over, lofting Siddharth to long-on to be caught by Aiden Markram for 45. Rinku Singh could not utilise the opportunity as he had his stumps dislodged while trying to steer pacer Avesh Khan to third man.

KKR's overseas duo of Green and Rovman Powell struggled to get going. Forget hitting the big boundaries, they could not even get the singles and twos, bringing down the run-rate drastically in the middle overs.

The Knights who touched 100 in 10.4 overs could reach only 115 five overs later. Powell tried to take on the attack as he stepped down the track to lift Manimaran Siddhatrth over long-on for a six, a much-needed boundary coming after 5.1 overs. However, Green looked woefully out of sorts. He got his first boundary off Prince while Powell got a six and four in the same over to help KKR get 66 runs in the last five over.

SCOREBOARD

KKR: A Rahane c Shami b Rathi 41, F Allen c Rathi b Prince 9, A Raghuvanshi c Markram b Siddarth 45, C Green not out 32, R Singh b Avesh 4, R Powell not out 39; **Extras: (b1, lb3, w7) 11; Total: (4 wkts, 20 ovrs) 181; FoW:** 1-15, 2-99, 3-105, 4-111; **Bowling:** Shami 4-0-27-0, Prince 4-0-47-1, Siddharth 4-0-34-1, Rathi 4-0-25-1, Avesh 4-0-44-1. **LSG:** Marsh c Raghuvanshi b Arora 15, Markram c Powell b Arora 22, Pant c Kartik b Green 10, Badoni c Singh b Roy 54, Pooran c Ramandeep b Kartik 13, Samad b Roy 2, Mukul (not out) 54, Shami c Roy b Narine 1, Avesh (not out) 1. **Extras: (B-1, LB-2, NB-1, W-6) 10. Total: (for 7 wickets, 20 overs) 182. FoW:** 1-41, 2-42, 3-73, 4-95, 5-104, 6-125, 7-128. **Bowling:** Vaibhav 4-0-38-2, Anukul 4-0-32-2, Navdeep 3-0-37-0, Narine 4-0-13-1, Kartik 3-0-31-1, Green 2-0-28-1

WEATHER

26°C

4 Ten-wicket wins for RCB, the most in the IPL. Two of those have come against Rajasthan Royals, in Bengaluru in 2010 and at the Wankhede in 2021.

113 Virat Kohli's unbeaten 113 off 72 balls in Jaipur on April 6, 2024 is the highest individual score in RR-RCB matches.

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
RR	3	3	0	0	2.403	6
PBKS	3	2	0	1	0.637	5
RCB	2	2	0	0	2.501	4
DC	3	2	1	0	0.811	4
LSG	3	2	1	0	-0.359	4
SRH	3	1	2	0	0.275	2
GT	3	1	2	0	-0.270	2
MI	3	1	2	0	-0.715	2
KKR	4	0	3	1	-1.315	1
CSK	3	0	3	0	-2.517	0

Updated till KKR vs LSG match on Thursday

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Can RCB keep Vaibhav in check?

Sourav.M@timesofindia.com

Guwahati: Despite their superb all-round performance in the first three matches of 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL), all discussions about Rajasthan Royals' high-flying start to the season have centred around a certain 15-year-old phenomenon, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

Be it the pre-match media interactions or post-match presentations, coaches and players from the Royals as well as rival camps and cricket pundits, all have been asked or spoken about the teenage sensation with much adulation.

The eve of Royals' third and last home match this season here at their second home ground was not different either, even with the in-form defending champions Royals Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), inspired by King Virat Kohli, coming to the city for the first time to play an IPL game at Barsapara Cricket Stadium.

PREVIEW

Royals' fast bowling coach Shane Bond was full of praise for the teen prodigy on Thursday. "He's incredible. I have a 17-year-old son, and when I compare him to Vaibhav, what he's doing is remarkable," Bond told the media ahead of hitting the nets. Highlighting his maturity level and developing game awareness, the former Kiwi pacer added, "It's not just reckless hitting, he's picking the right balls and showing growth. There's a maturity in his batting."

While the boy wonder has expectedly translated his flamboyance into match-defining knocks up front, his 'senior' opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal has displayed his class with calm and composed knocks to hold the Orange Cap with 170 runs including two half-centuries to his name from three games.

If the batting, led by the openers' blistering innings, has given the home side solid platforms for victories, their bowlers have done their job to near perfection as the Royals sit on the top of the table having notched up their straight third win in as many games.

However, on Friday, they will take on a side who is in a similar kind of form. Comfortably winning their first two games, RCB looked to have started from where they left off last season. With batting and bowling units firing in unison, the Rajat Patidar-led side would aim to halt the Royals juggernaut. Although all the top order batters have been firing for RCB, it's Devdutt Padikkal who has held the spotlight scoring beautifully paced half-centuries in their last two games. Though Phil Salt and Kohli have given them explosive starts, RCB batting has clearly flourished around the southpaw, and he would like to continue his rich form with the willow.

Captain Patidar and Tim David are in great touch, too, and would pose a tough test to the Royals bowling unit led by new-ball bowlers Jofra Archer and Nandre Burger. Add experienced Sandeep Sharma, Ravindra Jadeja and Ravi Bishnoi, and young Tushar Deshpande, to the mix and Royals have a formidable bowling unit to stand up to the challenge.

The Yuvi touch in Prabhsimran's rise

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New Delhi: The influence of Yuvraj Singh on India's current generation of batters is often understated. His imprint runs through some of the most exciting talent, from Shubman Gill and Abhishek Sharma to Sanju Samson. In many ways, Yuvraj has slipped into a role Indian cricket doesn't officially define — part mentor, part sounding board, part older brother. Players drift in and out of his orbit, carrying back small but telling adjustments.

YUVRAJ SINGH

PRABHSIMRAN

The latest to step into this quietly influential ecosystem is Punjab Kings wicketkeeper-batter Prabhsimran Singh. Long regarded as a talent waiting to arrive, Prabhsimran now finds himself closer to being all he can be as a cricketer. "My relationship with Yuvi *paaji* is actually not like that of a coach or student. I have a big brother relationship with him," Prabhsimran said during an interaction arranged by the Punjab Kings on Thursday. "And yes, Priyansh (Arya) and I trained under him recently. It was Priyansh's first time practicing with him. Whenever I get free time, I just call him and say, '*Paaji*, we are free right now and want to practice with you,' and he arranges it. Whether it's in Mohali or Gurgaon, he manages everything himself. With him, it's like even if we have to call him at 3 am or 4 am, we can. That's the kind of freedom he has given us. We can share anything with Yuvi *paaji* without any hesitation," the 25-year-old said.

For a player like Prabhsimran, this ease seems to have translated into clarity. Not necessarily in sweeping technical overhauls but in subtler calibrations. "He has given me tips and it is mostly about how I'm playing at a particular time or what should I do with my technique. He talks about the mental side of the game and what kind of mindset we should have during various situations," he said.

It shows in the shift in Prabhsimran's approach to batting. "Earlier, I used to get out in the 30s or 40s. Now I look to play longer innings. The goal is to create enough impact so you can win matches. The game has become fast now. If you look at average scores, they have moved to 200-plus. To score so many runs, you just have to come in and start attacking," he said.

Rashid rediscovers spin bite

After Two Lean IPL Seasons, Gujarat Titans Leggie Serves A Reminder Of Why Class Is Permanent

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New Delhi: Champions are never easily written off. Rashid Khan offered a sharp reminder of that at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Wednesday night, producing a spell of old quality as Gujarat Titans edged Delhi Capitals by one run in a high-scoring thriller.

For some time, doubts had swirled around Rashid. That he was on the decline. That batters had decoded him. After two modest IPL seasons by his standards, the questions were understandable.

His numbers underlined the slump. Rashid took nine wickets from 15 matches for Gujarat Titans last season at an average of 57.1. The year before was only slightly better. For a bowler who built his reputation on control, menace and certainty, it marked a clear dip. So there was little surprise when Rashid interrupted the opening question in his post-match interaction, which was about last season. "Don't remind me *yaar*, it was very bad," he said, before explaining that his struggles over the last two years were linked to a back surgery he had delayed in order to play in the 2023 ODI World Cup.

"I think I pushed myself a lot in that World Cup and after that, it was really bad. I was not able to walk after the tournament," he added. That made his effort against Delhi Capitals stand out even more.

On a surface that offered little help to bowlers, Rashid was the one man who broke the flow. He finished with 3/17 from four overs and halted Capitals just when the chase was gathering pace. Introduced in the fifth over, he first hinted at his touch by beating KL Rahul with a leg-break that drifted in and then spun away.

He then changed the game in his third over. Nitish Rana failed to read the wrong 'un and miscued to Sai Sudharsan at long-off. The next ball was even better — a googly that completely deceived Sameer Rizvi and bowled him for a golden duck. Rashid later removed Axar Patel as well, leaving Capitals off balance in a chase they had seemed to control.

"After long, I got such a wicket (Rizvi's). As a leg-spinner, you want that kind of delivery, where you beat the batter. I'm quite happy, it gave me so much confidence. I feel in the last two games, I bowled well," Rashid said.

The leg-spinner credited his return to improved fitness. "That surgery affected my bowling action, the release and everything. After having a bad season (in 2025) I thought, 'Ok, what's wrong now?' I felt like it was the whole rhythm, from starting to the finishing."

"I gave myself a couple of months after the last IPL. I had a good Hundred competition in the UK. I focused on my fitness. That's something which I can improve and allows my body to bowl with full rhythm," he said.

No Tests for now

Afghanistan are scheduled to play a one-off Test against India in the first week of June and it is highly unlikely that Rashid will take the field. "Red-ball looks a bit difficult for me. The first thing my doctor told me (after surgery) was to stay away from it. I still bowled 67 overs against Zimbabwe, which was crazy! I'll just take it easy. Imagine something happens to my back in a Test," he said.

A no-run, a run-out as Capitals run out of ideas

Miller Quickly Goes From Hero To Zero As Bizarre End To DC-GT Game Takes Centrestage

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New Delhi: It was a bizarre, farcical end to a gripping contest as Delhi Capitals went down to Gujarat Titans by one run here on Wednesday. With two runs needed in two balls, it was David Miller's refusal to take a single off Prasidh Krishna's penultimate delivery and his failure to score off the final ball that resulted in an embarrassing loss for the Capitals.

Miller quickly went from hero to zero, since it was his innings that had resurrected Capitals' chances.

Capitals' skipper captain Axar Patel was quick to offer support to the South African by wrapping his arm around his shoulder when Miller was returning to the dugout. "In this type of close game, you can point out anything. But I think in the chase, we could have played smarter," Axar said.

DC opener Pathum Nissanka also defended Miller's move. "We haven't discussed it yet, but sometimes it happens in cricket," he said.

Until that moment, Miller had almost pulled off the improbable. Having retired hurt on 12, he returned in the 17th over. With 45 needed from the last three overs, he took 23 off Mohammed Siraj in the 19th to reduce the target to 13 off the last over. After Vipraj Nigam fell off the second ball, Miller hit Prasidh for six over long-off off the fourth, leaving Capitals two to win from two balls. Then came the refusal and the collapse.

While many criticised the decision, Sunil Gavaskar defended Miller's intent. "David Miller was backing himself, he had been striking the ball well and believed he could finish it. You can't fault that intent," Gavaskar said.

> **This is where game awareness becomes crucial. It reminds me of what Ravi Shastri did in that tied Test against Australia in 1986, taking a single at the right moment to level the scores. In this case, in hindsight, a single might have been the better option for Miller, especially after Kuldeep Yadav managed one earlier."**
> —Sunil Gavaskar

HEARTBREAK: Kagiso Rabada consoles Miller after DC's narrow loss

Vaishnavi impresses but Indonesia prevail over India

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Anindya Chattopadhyay

Vaishnavi Adkar in action against Priska Madelyn Nugroho on Thursday

New Delhi: India's Billie Jean King (BJK) Cup campaign on Thursday unfolded as a tale of two contrasting singles matches against Indonesia — one highlighted by grit and near-misses, the other a stark reminder of the gulf at the very top of women's tennis.

The headline act belonged to Indonesia's No. 1, Janice Tjen, World No. 41, who lived up to her billing with a ruthless display against the hosts' No. 2 Sahaja Yamalapalli. But before her commanding performance, it was India's young hope Vaishnavi Adkar who captured attention with a valiant, energy-sapping battle.

BJK CUP

Facing Priska Madelyn Nugroho, Vaishnavi entered the match with a slight rankings edge — 383 to 419 — and the belief that this was a winnable tie. For long stretches at the DLTA stadium, she justified that expectation. After a tentative start, trailing 0-2, the 21-year-old from Pune steadied herself, cutting down unforced errors and matching her opponent stroke for stroke.

The opening set turned into a test of nerve, with both players trading breaks before Vaishnavi edged the tie-break 7-3. She showed flashes of brilliance, particularly with her forehand returns, and demonstrated a fighting spirit that kept India in the contest.

Yet, inconsistency at crucial moments proved costly. In the second set, despite recovering from another early deficit and even holding a match point at 5-4, Vaishnavi couldn't close it out. Priska forced a tie-break, and this time held her nerve to level the match.

Sindarov outclasses Pragg

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FIDE

Javokhir Sindarov on Thursday

R Praggnandhaa played a bishop move on the 22nd turn and overlooked the threat Rf7 from his in-form opponent. And this time, Javokhir Sindarov was in no mood to waste an opportunity.

The Uzbek, who missed a winning sequence against Matthias Blubaum of Germany on Wednesday, showed the Indian no mercy in the 10th round of the Candidates chess tournament in Cyprus on Thursday.

CANDIDATES CHESS

Sindarov scored a record-breaking sixth win in the Candidates history (since this format was started in 2013) and jumped to eight points, with second-placed Anish Giri a full two points behind.

Though Pragg lost in 53 moves, his sister R Vaishali kept the siblings' flag flying with a draw with black against Anna Muzychuk. Being an overnight co-leader, it took Vaishali to six points. The 24-year-old Tamil Nadu girl, had drawn her first-leg game against the Ukrainian in the third round of this event. Their 10th round game on Thursday lasted 42 moves with only black-square bishops and two pawns each remaining on the board.

When the tournament started, the odds of Pragg winning the event were way higher than his sister Vaishali winning her section. But Vaishali has made the most of her opportunities and Pragg has wilted under pressure. Why Pragg needed 31 minutes to play his 18th move (Qe7) was baffling for the experts too.

Pragg's (4 points) oversight against Sindarov meant he lost his queen and it turned out to be queen and five pawns vs two rooks and two pawns endgame in Sindarov's favour.

When the things were turning decisively in Sindarov's favour, his good friend from the women's section — Bibisara Assaubayeva — had a peek at the board. The Kazakh, on 5.5 points like Muzychuk, went on to beat joint leader Zhu Jiner of China and helped Vaishali become sole leader.

Anish Giri (6 pts) needed to win to reduce the gap with Sindarov. But he had not beaten Hikaru Nakamura (4.5) in classical chess for more than 10 years. Fabiano Caruana needed to beat a player (Wei Yi) who had never won a classical game against him.

Top-3 (with 4 rounds to go): Open: Sindarov 8 points; Giri 6; Caruana 5; **Women:** Vaishali 6; Jiner & Muzychuk 5.5 each.

Gopinath, India's oldest Test cricketer, passes away

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Chennai: "The crowd applauded us for 15 minutes at a stretch after the Test match was over. I still remember that moment," CD Gopinath told **TOI** a few years ago, recalling India's historic first Test win at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in then Madras. It was 1952. India had beaten England in the fifth Test by an innings and eight runs. Gopinath had scored a breezy 35 to be one among that historic game's many heroes — Vinoo Mankad (12 wickets), Polly Umrigar (130) and Pankay Roy (111).

At 96, the last living member of that team, he passed away in his sleep here on Thursday. "Gopi was a lovely batsman to watch, a very natural player and a shrewd captain. He also kept wickets from time to time. But what always stood out was his geniality," V Ramnarayan, former Hyderabad off-spinner and a well-known cricket historian, who co-wrote Gopinath's autobiography, 'Beyond Cricket, A Life In Many Worlds', told **TOI**.

Gopinath played in eight Test matches, between 1951-60. But it wasn't without its share of controversies. "In Gopi's own words, during the 1952 Test series in England, he was insulted by captain Vijay Hazare. He felt he was being targeted because he was a South Indian and chose not to go for the next West Indies series," Ramnarayan said.

Gopinath's contribution to Tamil Nadu cricket was immense as well. He was part of the Madras team that won its first Ranji Trophy title in 1954-55. "In the final, against a powerful Holkar side which had Mushtaq Ali, he scored 133 in the first innings and had to take over the captaincy towards the business end of the game," Ramnarayan added.

Game hunting was one of Gopinath's interests. In 1955-56, Gopi took the visiting New Zealand team for a hunting expedition. "While returning, they got late and returned only on the morning of the match against South Zone. But Gopi went on to score a 175 in that game," the historian added.

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026

IF HARD WORK IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS, MOST PEOPLE WOULD RATHER PICK THE LOCK — CLAUDE MCDONALD

EXTRACTION 3 CONFIRMED WITH CHRIS HEMSWORTH AND IDRIS ELBA, PRODUCTION TO BEGIN THIS SUMMER

SEAN 'DIDDY' COMBS TO URGE COURT TO OVERTURN CONVICTION, CLAIMS JUDGE ERRED IN WEIGHING CLAIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

How China's last-minute push helped US and Iran call truce

China Guaranteed Iranian Leaders Of Safety During Future Talks: Report

As President Trump neared his self-imposed deadline to extinguish Iran's "entire civilisation," it became apparent one country had enough clout to convince Tehran to de-escalate: America's biggest rival, China.

In the hours after a ceasefire brokered by Pakistan was announced, Iranian officials reportedly credited a last-minute push by China with securing their acceptance, a claim soon after validated by Trump. Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif thanked China for its support, while the White House said Beijing's role in the truce took place at the "top levels" of the US and Chinese govts.

China hasn't confirmed or denied reports of its pivotal part in brokering the detente, and President Xi Jinping still hasn't publicly commented on the conflict. But the decision to step in reflects Beijing's ability to straddle strong ties with Iran, Gulf nations and Trump, and marks a departure from China's long-held preference of staying on the sidelines.

The shift came down to economics, as the conflict risked disrupting China's energy supplies and economy, said Zongyuan Zoe Liu, senior fellow for China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. Data due next week is expected to show a slowdown in industrial output and exports in the month after the US and Israel triggered the war. "Trump publicly crediting China is precisely the kind of political capital Beijing wanted ahead of a rescheduled summit."

A pause to the war would smooth Trump's visit to Beijing next month, with China's role leaving him in debt to his Chinese counterpart. Trump is already heading to Beijing with his punitive tariffs struck down by the Supreme Court, and with the US military presence in Asia diminished by resources diverted to West Asia.

For Beijing, however, wading into talks over a war with no easy resolution carries risks, even if that action is limited to behind-the-scenes pressure on a friend reliant on China's support. China is Iran's largest trading partner and primary buyer of its oil.

Underscoring the risks, Pakistani officials reportedly told The Guardian that while Islamabad acted as mediator, China functioned as "guarantor," promising Iranian officials they wouldn't be assassinated during any future negotiations. It's unclear how Beijing would offer such an assurance, or the motivation for doing so given the repercussions should something then go wrong.

When asked about the report, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning sidestepped the question at a regular briefing on Thursday, saying China "always advocates an early end to hostilities and resolve differences through diplomatic and political means to restore stability and peace in the Middle East (West Asia)."

Bringing Iran to the negotiation table, however, is only the first step to end hostilities. Tehran is seeking security guarantees that it won't be attacked again, and has publicly asked Beijing to play such a role — a request analysts say China is unlikely to accept.

"It is difficult to imagine China offering explicit security guarantees to Iran during or after a ceasefire," said Tong Zhao, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "Such commitments would run counter to its longstanding aversion to military risk — especially where confrontation with the US is conceivable." A China-Arab summit planned for this year will give officials from West Asia another chance to press Beijing to take a bigger role, said Wang Yiwei, a professor of international relations at Renmin University and a Chinese former diplomat. BLOOMBERG

Getty Images

People collect belongings from a destroyed building in Beirut, Lebanon

Didn't give military support to Iran: China

China's defence ministry on Thursday denied reports that Chinese firms provided satellite imagery and semiconductor chip manufacturing equipment to the Iranian military in the midst of the US-Israeli war against Iran. China firmly opposes the dissemination of speculative and insinuating disinformation targeting China by relevant parties, defence ministry spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang said. "China's position on the Iran issue is above-board and straightforward. We have always upheld an objective and impartial stance," Zhang said, noting that China has consistently worked to promote peace talks and "never added fuel to the fire". PTI

Spain ramps up criticism of Israel and US, defying Trump threats

Madrid: Spain decried Israeli strikes on Lebanon as well as the broader war on Iran on Thursday, cementing Madrid's role as an outspoken critic of the US and Israeli military campaigns despite US threats to punish non-cooperative Nato allies. Spain's opposition to the Iran conflict has further strained its relations with Washington, and figures within President Trump's MAGA movement are increasingly urging him to punish Madrid.

In remarks to lawmakers, foreign minister Jose Manuel Albares described the conflict as an attack on civilisation, echoing scathing criticism heaped by PM Pedro Sanchez on Trump's decision to attack the Islamic Republic. "We're facing the greatest assault on the civilisation built upon the humanist ideals of reason, peace, understanding and universal law over the abuse of power, brute force and arbitrariness," Albares said.

He accused Israel of violating international law and the two-week ceasefire after a massive wave of airstrikes across Lebanon killed more than 250 people on Wednesday. Sanchez said Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's "contempt for life and international law is intolerable". Sanchez has welcomed the ceasefire, but said Spain would "not applaud those who set the world on fire just because they turn up with a bucket," in reference to the US.

On Wednesday, Spain and Italy summoned Israeli envoys in protest against separate incidents involving UN peacekeepers in Lebanon. REUTERS

Bitcoin at the bottleneck: Iran Hormuz hafta rattles markets

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: Iran has moved to reassert control over the Strait of Hormuz within hours of Israel's continued strikes in Lebanon, putting a squeeze on shipping movement just 48 hours before talks are scheduled to commence in Islamabad. Tehran's actions—ranging from enhanced inspections to outright halts of tankers—have contradicted US claims that the strait remains open and secure.

The White House has dismissed reports of a renewed closure as exaggerated, insisting that any attempt to block the strait would be "completely unacceptable." Yet on the ground—or rather, at sea—the situation appears far murkier.

But shipping companies report delays, rerouting, and heightened scrutiny by Iranian authorities, suggesting that control of the strait is, at the very least, contested. Physical stoppage is not even necessary; because of fears that Iran may have mined the straits, insurance companies are not covering ships, resulting in the vessels simply not moving.

Compounding the uncertainty is a striking report in the Financial Times that Iran intends to impose tolls on vessels transiting the strait, payable in cryptocurrency. According to Iranian industry representatives, tankers would be required to declare cargo, undergo assessment, and then pay approximately $1 per barrel in digital currency such as Bitcoin—within seconds—to avoid traceability under sanctions.

The Iranian proposal underscores Tehran's broader strategy: to leverage its geographic advantage during the ceasefire window while testing new mechanisms to circumvent western financial restrictions. The fact that President Trump has suggested the US could partner with Iran in extracting such a toll, legitimising the gouging, has alarmed even Americans.

This dispute over maritime control is only one facet of a much larger gulf between the US' 15-point framework and Iran's 10-point proposal, with divergences spanning nearly every critical issue: nuclear enrichment limits, regional proxy activity, sanctions relief, and control of strategic waterways. While the ceasefire has provided a pause in direct hostilities, both sides appear to be using the interval to regroup and reinforce their positions.

Indeed, President Trump himself all but acknowledged as much in a characteristically combative message on social media, warning that US military forces remain poised for renewed action if Iran fails to comply with what he termed a "REAL AGREEMENT."

Such rhetoric has done little to reassure sceptics. Back in Washington, citicism is mounting that the Trump administration may have inadvertently ceded strategic ground to Iran. Even within Trump's political base, voices are emerging that question the coherence of the approach. The so-called "Taco Tuesday" jibe—short for "Trump Always Chickens Out"—has gained traction among critics who see the ceasefire as a climbdown rather than a calculated pause.

Getty Images

People gather for a memorial for Ayatollah Khamenei in Tehran on Thursday

Iran warns ships to keep to its waters

Ship traffic through the Strait of Hormuz stood at well below 10% of normal volumes on Thursday despite a US-Iran ceasefire as Tehran asserted its control by warning ships to keep to its territorial waters while doing so. Iran must open the strait without conditions, the CEO of UAE state oil giant ADNOC said on Thursday. Just seven ships had passed through the strait in the past 24 hours versus about 140 normally, ship-tracking data showed. A chemical tanker was set to cross destined for India, ship-tracking data on the MarineTraffic and Pole Star Global platforms showed. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have told vessels to sail through Iranian waters around Larak Island to avoid the risk of naval mines, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on Thursday. REUTERS

Donald 'two weeks' Trump taunted after Taco Tuesday

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: In the elastic universe of President Donald Trump, time is not measured in days or months or years, but in something far more mystical – "two weeks." The Trumpian fortnight is a unit so versatile, so enduring, and so reliably undelivered that it has become less a deadline and more a state of mind — it is a period of time that is perpetually beginning, never ending, and carries the structural integrity of cotton candy.

For years now, the MAGA boss has deployed the "two-week" timeline with the casual confidence of a man ordering a Big Mac. A new health care plan? Two weeks. A replacement for Obamacare? Two weeks. Evidence of election fraud? Two weeks. Gold Card? Two weeks. The pattern is so consistent that Washington watchers have come to treat "two weeks" not as a promise but as a polite conversational exit — the political and social equivalent of "Let's get together sometime" or "I'll circle back." Only in Trump's case, the circle rarely closes.

Consider the greatest hits. There was the long-promised, never-seen "beautiful" health care plan, which Trump insisted would be unveiled in two weeks. This refrain stretched across years, presidencies and global pandemics, with the plan itself achieving almost mythical status — spoken of often, seen never. Then came the tax return saga. At various points, Trump assured Americans that his returns would be released in two weeks — just as soon as audits concluded, or legal hurdles cleared, or perhaps when Mercury aligned with Mar-a-Lago. The returns did eventually emerge, though not on Trump's timetable, and not within a fortnight.

TRUMP'S WEAKENED TWO WEEKS

Trump floated the idea of a "gold card" immigration initiative, promising details within — you guessed it — two weeks. Like many of its predecessors, the concept briefly lit up headlines before drifting into the vast archive of Trumpian tomorrows. The latest – the President's pivot from "total civilisation-ending" annihilation of Iran to a "two-week ceasefire."

The phenomenon has not gone unnoticed by late-night comedians, who have turned Trump's temporal tic into a durable punchline. Jimmy Kimmel, among others, has repeatedly lampooned the habit, compiling montages of "two-week" promises that stretch longer than some govt projects. "He says 'two weeks' the way a parent tells a kid they'll go to Disney World 'next summer,'" Kimmel joked in a recent monologue. "It's not a date on a calendar; it's a polite way of saying 'Please go away and let me watch Fox News.'"

Political flunkeys suggest the explanation is less strategic than instinctive. Trump, they say, favours immediacy — the appearance of action without the burden of specificity. "Two weeks" is short enough to sound decisive, yet distant enough to avoid accountability. It is the Goldilocks of deadlines: not too soon, not too far, but just vague enough.

Critics argue that the habit reflects a broader governing style — one that prioritises announcement over execution, momentum over follow-through, something India is familiar with. Supporters, meanwhile, often shrug it off as rhetorical flourish, part of the improvisational charm that has long defined Trump's political persona. Either way, the result is the same: a growing catalogue of initiatives that exist primarily in the future tense.

In Washington's more cynical corners, "two weeks" has taken on a life of its own. It is invoked knowingly by lawmakers, staffers and journalists alike — a wink, a nod, a shared understanding that some deadlines are not meant to be kept.

Islamabad put under lockdown as Pak preps to host US-Iran talks

Security man searches a commuter at a checkpoint in Islamabad. Pakistan has cut off all access to a 3-km zone around the hotel where the US and Iranian delegates will be staying. All guests have been told to check out

Getty Images

Islamabad: Pakistan on Thursday beefed up security in the national capital as it prepares for high-stakes talks between the US and Iran this weekend with anxiety.

Authorities locked down the capital Islamabad, cutting off all access to a 3-km zone around the five-star luxury Serena Hotel. Both the US and Iranian delegations are expected to stay at the hotel, which told all guests to check out until Sunday as it had been "requisitioned" for "an important event".

The hotel has been placed under govt control, while roads leading to the area have been sealed. Checkpoints, barricades and patrols have been stepped up across the city and extra security forces deployed.

Security officials said the measures went beyond routine arrangements for a high-profile visit, with airspace surveillance enhanced and emergency services placed on standby.

An Iranian delegation was expected to arrive in Islamabad late on Thursday night for talks, Iran's ambassador to Pakistan said on Thursday. "Despite scepticism of Iranian public opinion due to repeated ceasefire violations by the Israeli regime, the Iranian delegation will arrive in Islamabad for serious talks based on 10 points proposed by Iran," ambassador Reza Moghadam said.

On Thursday, interior minister Mohsin Naqvi assured US Charge d'affaires Natalie Baker of foolproof security for all foreign dignitaries when she met him to discuss the preparation for the upcoming talks. Naqvi assured that the US delegation members were "our special guests," according to a statement issued by the ministry of interior.

Dawn reported that a 30-member advance US team had already arrived in Islamabad to review security arrangements. Authorities have already announced a two-day local holiday on Thursday and Friday in the capital to ensure the security of the delegates and their stay in Islamabad. PTI

Want Hormuz commitments within days, Trump told Nato chief: Report

Nato secretary general Mark Rutte has briefed some capitals that US President Trump wants concrete commitments within the next few days for help securing the Strait of Hormuz, three European diplomats told Reuters on Thursday. Rutte met with Trump in Washington on Wednesday, amid tensions within the alliance over the Iran war.

"The secretary general is in contact with allies about his discussions in Washington," Nato spokesperson Allison Hart said on Thursday. "It's clear that the US expects concrete commitments and action to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz," she added.

The US president has repeatedly called Nato a "paper tiger" and threatened to withdraw from the 32-member transatlantic alliance in recent weeks, arguing that Washington's European allies have relied on US security guarantees while providing inadequate support for the US-Israeli bombing campaign in Iran.

"We note the frustration in Washington, but they did not consult allies either before or after starting this war," said one of the diplomats.

"Nato as such would not play a role in the war against Iran, but allies want to be helpful in seeking longer-term solutions for Hormuz. With negotiations ongoing with Iran, this could be helpful," the diplomat said. Although Trump said on Tuesday the attacks on Iran would be paused under a two-week ceasefire, the fallout from the conflict has continued to strain ties.

Trump posted on Truth Social after the meeting in capitalised letters that "Nato wasn't there when we needed them, and they won't be there if we need them again."

Dutchman Rutte, known in Europe as a "Trump whisperer" and who has faced criticism for frequently praising the US leader, declined to say Thursday whether President Donald Trump had repeated his threat to quit the military organisation, saying only that the US leader was disappointed in some allies for being too slow to help with the Iran war. AGENCIES

US mulling pulling out some troops from Europe?

President Donald Trump, upset at Nato allies' failure to help secure the Strait of Hormuz and angry that his plans to acquire Greenland have not moved forward, has discussed with advisers the option of removing some US troops from Europe, a senior White House official told Reuters on Thursday. No decision has been made and the White House has not directed the Pentagon to draw up concrete plans for a troop reduction on the continent, said the official, who requested anonymity. But the discussions alone underscore how sharply relations between Washington and its European Nato allies have deteriorated in recent months. They also suggest a visit to the White House Wednesday by Nato chief Rutte failed to improve transatlantic ties. REUTERS

Iran publishes chart showing it may have put sea mines in Strait of Hormuz

Dubai: Semiofficial news agencies in Iran published a chart on Thursday suggesting the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard put sea mines into the Strait of Hormuz during the war, in a message that may be intended to pressure the US.

The chart of the Strait of Hormuz was released by the ISNA news agency, as well as Tasnim, which is believed to be close to the Guard. They showed a large circle marked "danger zone" in Farsi over the Traffic Separation Scheme, which was the route ships take through the strait, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of all oil and natural gas traded once passed.

The chart suggested ships travel further north through waters closer to Iran's mainland near Larak Island, a route some ships were observed taking during the war. It was dated from Feb 28 until Thursday, April 9, and it was unclear if the Guard had cleared any mining on the route since then.

Reuters

Cargo ships near the Strait of Hormuz

Iran's deputy foreign minister, Saeed Khatibzadeh, said his country will allow ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz in accordance with "international norms and international law" once the US ends its "aggression" in West Asia and Israel stops attacking Lebanon. Khatibzadeh told the BBC Thursday that Iran had closed the strait after Israel committed an "intentional grave violation of the ceasefire." He added that "we have shown to everybody that energy security is pivotal for Iran, is pivotal for this body of water in the Persian Gulf..." REUTERS

Iran's N-agency chief says its right to enrich uranium necessary for talks

Dubai: The chief of Iran's nuclear agency said on Thursday that protecting Tehran's right to enrich uranium is "necessary" for any ceasefire talks with the US. **Mohammad Eslami**, who leads the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, made the remarks to journalists in Tehran during commemorations for the late supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "It is a part of the necessary (things) that nobody speaks about," Eslami said, referring to the US refusal to acknowledge enrichment as one part of Iran's 10-point plan for a permanent ceasefire. AP

Israeli attacks killed 303 on Wednesday: Lebanon

▶Continued from P1

The result is a diplomatic impasse that has already spilled into military signaling, even as Vance's Air Force Two is revving engines for the long flight to Islamabad.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff, whose son Zach Witkoff is seen as a "crypto bro" with close ties to the Pakistani establishment, and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, will accompany Vance, the White House said.

Netanyahu, whose govt rebuffed a historic offer for direct talks with Lebanon last month, said in a statement he had given instructions to start peace talks as soon as possible, which would also include disarming Iran-aligned militant group Hezbollah. "In light of Lebanon's repeated requests to open direct negotiations with Israel, I instructed the cabinet yesterday to start direct negotiations with Lebanon as soon as possible," he said. An hour before Netanyahu's statement, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said he was working on a diplomatic track on this matter that was starting to be seen "positively" by international actors.

A senior Lebanese official said Lebanon had spent the last day pushing for a temporary ceasefire to allow for broader talks with Israel.

Lebanon's health ministry, meanwhile, said on Thursday that the toll from Israel's strikes the previous day across Lebanon had risen to 303 killed.

Pak man charged with plan to hit Jewish centre in NY pleads guilty

A Pakistani citizen has pleaded guilty to plotting an Islamic State-inspired terrorist attack at a prominent Jewish centre in Brooklyn, New York, according to FBI, reports **Rajshekhar Jha**. Mohammad Shahzeb Khan, who lived in Canada, planned a mass shooting – which he claimed would be the largest attack on US soil since 9/11 – timed to coincide with the anniversary of the Oct 7 Hamas attacks, with the explicit goal of killing as many Jews as possible.

Khan aka Shahzeh London pleaded guilty to charges of attempting to commit acts of terrorism transcending national boundaries, for attempting to enter the United States and carry out a mass shooting with automatic weapons. He is scheduled to be sentenced on Aug 12.

The justice department said that Khan had declared that New York City was the 'perfect' venue for his attack because of its large Jewish population. However , his plan was disrupted before he reached US.

UK: Deployed military to deter Russian subs from attack on undersea cables

London: Britain deployed military vessels to prevent any attacks on cables and pipelines by Russian submarines, which spent more than a month in and around British waters earlier this year, its defence minister John Healey said on Thursday. Britain accused Russia of using the distraction of events in West Asia to try to conduct the covert operation in the High North maritime region, home to key shipping routes and critical infrastructure.

Healey said British forces and allies, including Norway, tracked and deterred malign activity by the Russian vessels, adding that the submarines have now left the area and there were no signs of damage to underwater infrastructure.

Revealing the operation publicly, Healey said the intent was to show Russian President Vladimir Putin the activity was detected. "Our armed forces left them in no doubt that they were being monitored, that their movements were not covert, as President Putin planned, and that their attempted operation was exposed," he said.

Healey said the Russian operation involved a Russian Akula-class attack submarine and two specialist submarines from Moscow's Main Directorate for Deep Sea Research. Britain sent a frigate, a support tanker and a maritime patrol aircraft to monitor their movements. Norway said its armed forces also deployed a P-8 maritime patrol aircraft and a frigate. Healey said the submarines had not entered Britain's territorial waters but were in its 'exclusive economic zone'. REUTERS

AFP

UK defence minister John Healey said Britain sent a frigate, a support tanker and a maritime patrol aircraft to monitor movements of Russian subs

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The singer has pledged to work on a 'positive' song on women empowerment

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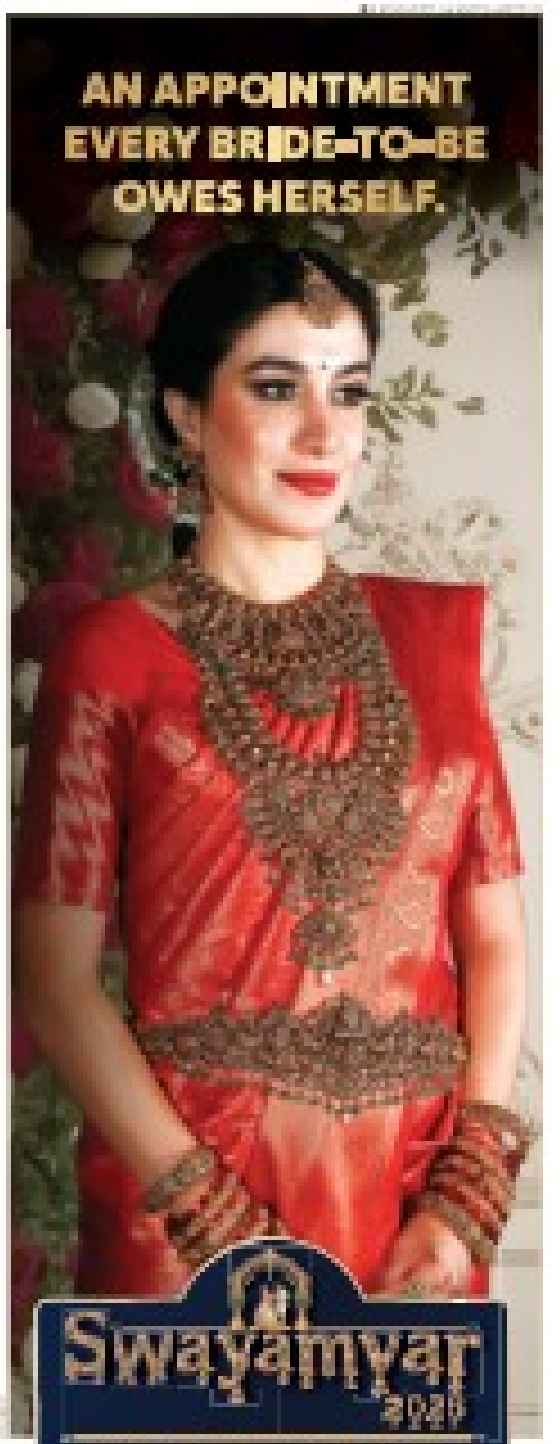

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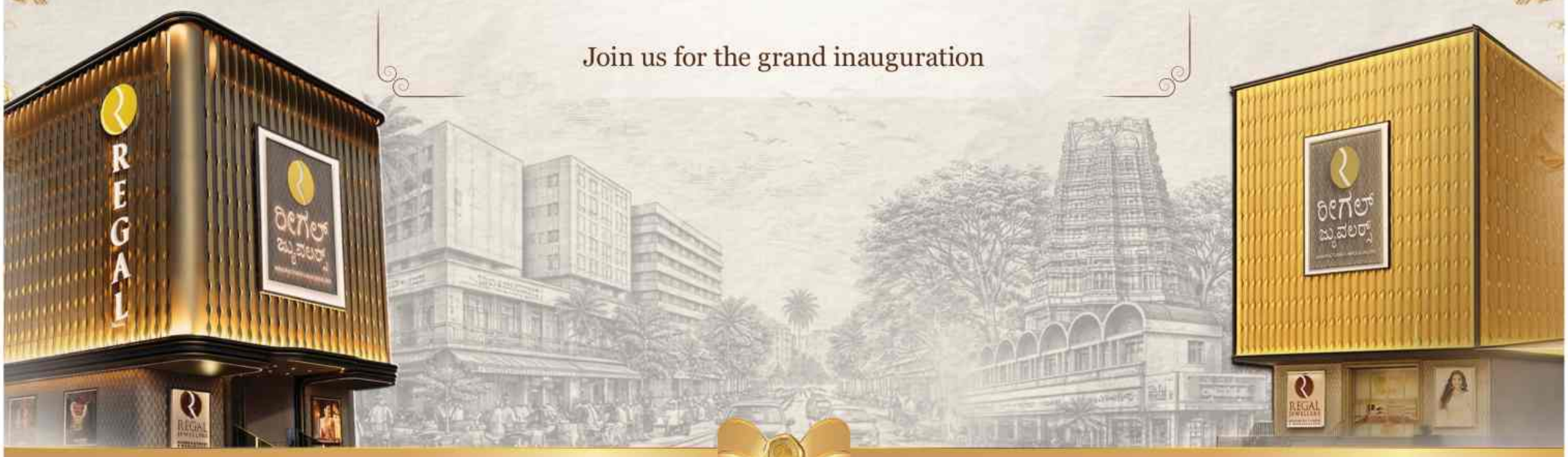

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